Angara now backs GMA; Senate shake-up looms

Story on PAGE A2

GMA oks Council of State

A "COUNCIL of State" as a complete expression of the administration's vision of a government of national unity was approved last night by the ruling Lakas-CMD in a meeting chaired by President Macapagal.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said that the council will be composed of the President, Vice President, representatives from the private sector, rebel groups like the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, National Democratice Front for as long as the two groups would ad-

GMA/A11

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Shed 'happy tears' for Patricia Borromeo

BORROMEO

"HAPPY tears, happy tears," Patricia Panlilio Borromeo kept repeating on her deathbed to comfort her loved ones as she slowly, lovingly left them

SHED/A10

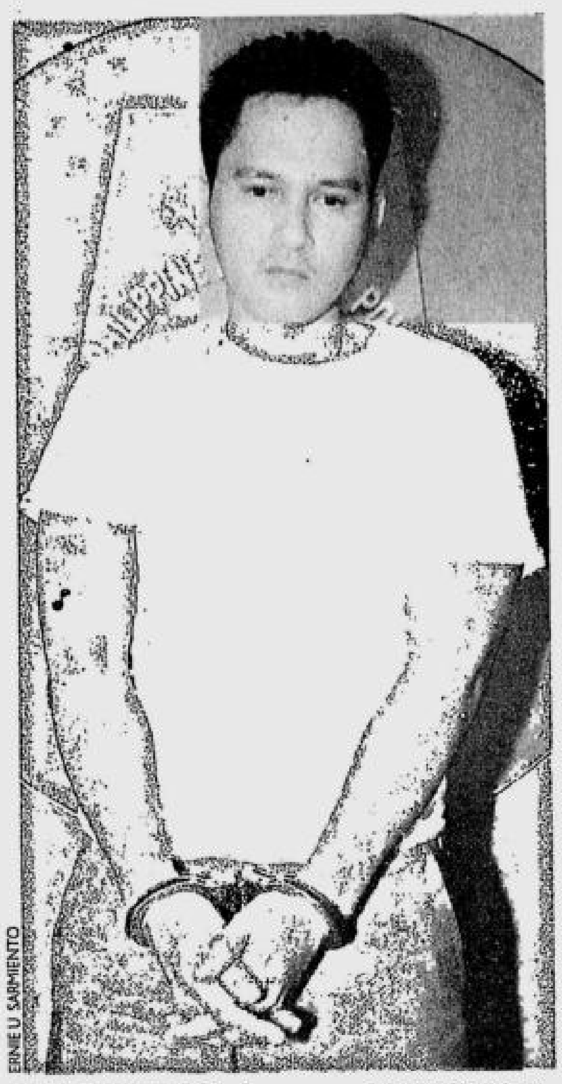
email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

Thursday, January 9, 2003 ★★ 38 pages / 3 sections / vol. 18 / no. 32 P15

website: www.inq7.net

'Victim, suspect met in US in 2001'

Police director says Viña was with 2 officers



ERNIE U SARMIENTO

THE GUNMAN, Medar Cruz, according to seven people who saw the killing. Presented yesterday at Camp Crame, Cruz maintains his innocence.

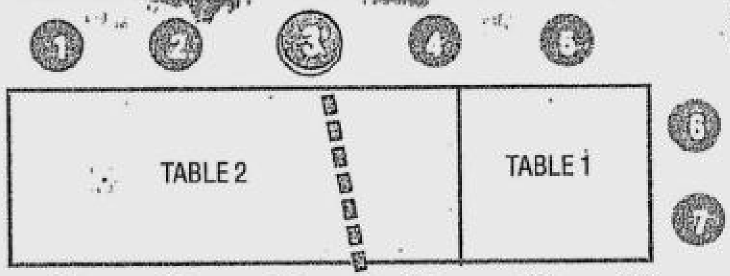
TONEE DESPOJO/PDI VISAYAS BUREAU

THE VICTIM, Sr. Supt. Teofilo Viña, in this file photo taken while he was the Visayas PAOCTF chief.

WHO SAT WHERE

(According to police diagram)

1. Unknown visitor
2. Unknown visitor
3. Supt. Teofilo Viña (victim)
4. Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco
5. Mayor Dencito Campaña
6. Unknown visitor
7. Abel— (illegible)
8. Eufrocinio Dones
9. Flaviano Satsatin (host)
10. Rene Arenas
11. Eustacio Cruz
12. Iman— (illegible)
13. Danny Talactac
14. Medar Cruz (suspect)



RANDY HORMILLOSA

SCENE of crime: Front yard of the residence of former Councilor Flaviano Satsatin in Barangay Santol, Tanza, Cavite.

By TJ Burgonio, *in Manila*
Floreño G. Solmirano and Fausto Tatad Jr.
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

"*KURSUNADA ko lang* (I just want to do it)."

This was the answer of suspect Medar Cruz, a *balikbayan*, when asked by a witness why he shot and killed Senior Supt. Teofilo Viña on Tuesday night in Tanza, Cavite, police officials said.

Viña was one of the suspects in the murder of public relations practitioner Salvador "Bubby" Dacer and his driver Emmanuel Corbito.

But the cold-blooded murder may have nothing to do with "*kursunada*."

The victim and the suspect were acquaintances, according to Senior Supt. Roberto Rosales, police director for Cavite. He said that Viña and Cruz had met in the "summer of 2001" at the Cruz family residence at Virginia Beach in Virginia, USA.

Cruz, who turned 26 yesterday, has maintained innocence although seven eyewitnesses had pointed to him as the gunman. He has refused to cooperate since he was taken into police custody and placed under tactical interrogation Tuesday night.

"He insisted that he was not the gunman and was not present at the time of the killing," Rosales said. *(See story below.)*

But results of the paraffin tests showed that Cruz's right hand tested positive for gunpowder burns.

Rosales said seven people who witnessed the killing, including Gen. Trias Mayor Dencito Campaña, State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco, former Councilor Flaviano Satsatin, the suspect's father, Viña's aide identified only as Ambata, and a guest

VICTIM/A11

DOJ prosecutor seated beside murder victim

By Christian V. Esguerra, *in Manila*
and Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

IT WAS a party for friends and neighbors. But it proved to be the last supper for Senior Supt. Teofilo Viña. And the Viña murder was witnessed by a state prosecutor.

The gathering was the first to be attended by both State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco and Viña since their days at the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force (PAOCTF) during the Estrada administration. Velasco had served as a PAOCTF lawyer while Viña had been assigned at the task force's Visayas command.

Medar T. Cruz, a *balikbayan*, shot Viña at the

DOJ/A11

House refuses to give up on Cha-cha

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

IT'S never say die for House leaders despite the warning of some senators that Charter change is dead in the water.

Batanes Rep. Florencio Abad, president of the Liberal Party, and Tarlac Rep. Gilbert Teodoro, head of the Nationalist People's Coalition, yesterday invoked numbers in pushing the initiative to shift to a parliamentary form of government patterned after the French system.

Abad said that except for Sen. Francis Pangilinan and Tarlac Rep. Benigno Aquino III, LP members were in favor of Charter change and a parliamentary shift. Teodoro said the same for most of the NPC, which has 63 members in the House.

Both men advocate the model under which the people elect a president and a prime minister who will serve as head of government.

But Foreign Secretary Blas Ople said the move to amend the Constitution to pave the way for a new system of government and, consequently, the postponement of the 2004 elections was a "highly immoral proposition."

Over lunch with reporters, Ople warned of "chaos and catastrophe" should lawmakers, particularly in the House, push the initiative at this point.

He said he found it strange that congressmen led by Speaker Jose de Venecia would move for a parliamentary shift even after President Macapagal-Arroyo had decided to stand down in the 2004 elections.

"If this is meant to extend the terms of government officials from the President down to the last municipal councilor, then it becomes a highly immoral proposition that should be rejected outright," Ople said.

He said it would be the "height of greed" for De Venecia to con-

HOUSE/A10

Osmeña, De Villa back Roco

By Carlito Pablo
and Juliet Javellana

THE CONSISTENT leader in presidential surveys, Raul Roco, got a further boost yesterday when two key allies of President Macapagal-Arroyo endorsed him as the standard-bearer of the ruling coalition.

Also, Roco's "adoption" as the Lakas-CMD's presidential candidate was set to be proposed during the ruling party's leaders meeting convened by Ms Macapagal last night in Malacañang.

Former Executive Secretary Renato de Villa and Emilio Osmeña, chair of the Reforma party and president of the Promdi party, respectively endorsed Roco as the

OSMENA/A10

Biazon rejects all offers; BF says he's got 2 posts

By Rocky Nazareno, Carlito Pablo
and Donna S. Cueto,

IT TURNS out that Sen. Rodolfo Biazon was offered not only the public works portfolio but also the top posts of the Bureau of Customs and of the soon to be formed Department of Housing and Urban Development (DHUD)—all of which he declined.

The opposition senator and former chief of staff of the Armed Forces yesterday said it was "go-betweens" in the opposition Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino who had dangled the Customs and DHUD posts to him.

Describing his decision to reject the President's offer for him to head the DPWH, Biazon said he did not want to be "a square peg in a round hole."

"Personally, being recruited to the Cabinet is not my idea of cooperation, especially if the position that is being offered requires technical expertise that is not in line with my personal professional experience, training and education," he said.

Metro Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando said early last night that he would head both the MMDA and the Department of Public Works and Highways in a concurrent capacity.

"I am grateful to the President for her confidence and trust in me," said Fernando, who took a few days before agreeing to take up the post vacated by the ap-

JOVY/A10

Arab leaders offer Saddam asylum to prevent war with US, says Ople

By Michael Lim Ubac

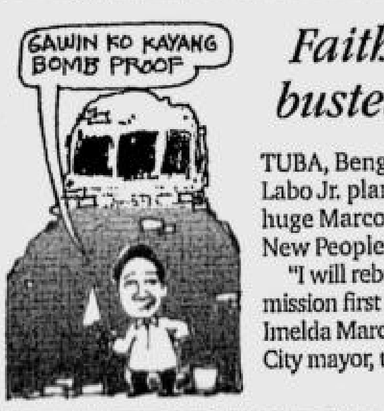
THE ARAB world has urged Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein to voluntarily leave Baghdad and offered him asylum in Libya to avert war with the United States, Foreign Secretary Blas Ople yesterday said.

Ople said the information was relayed to him by Middle Eastern ambassadors whom he met earlier this week.

"I talked to the Arab ambassadors and they said there is a good solution to this (crisis)," the foreign secretary told reporters in a luncheon briefing.

"Some of their governments are urging Saddam Hussein to withdraw voluntarily from Iraq and find refuge in a third country. This will also avoid the possibility of a bloody war and this will save

ARAB/A10



GAWIN KO KAYANG BOMB PROOF

Faith healer to fix busted Marcos bust

TUBA, Benguet—Faith healer Ramon Labo Jr. plans to do a face-lift on the huge Marcos bust that the communist New People's Army had defaced.

"I will rebuild it but I have to get the permission first of *ninang* (former first lady Imelda Marcos)," Labo, a former Baguio City mayor, told reporters yesterday.

FAITH/A10

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern Luzon, Eastern Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/01/09/03

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONT PAGE

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Angara now backs GMA; Senate shakeup looms

By Dona Pazzibugan

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo and opposition leader Sen. Edgardo Angara have agreed to cooperate in pushing the administration's priority bills.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said Angara offered his "collaboration and support" for the President's legislative agenda during a meeting last Tuesday. He declined to say where the meeting took place.

Bunye said Angara, who had welcomed the President's recent declaration that she would not run in the 2004 elections, requested the meeting. He denied that Ms Macapagal, in return, promised to support Angara's renewed bid for the Senate presidency.

"No such thing was discussed," Bunye said, quoting the President.

In a morning radio interview, Bunye said the President would not interfere even if the Senate leadership went to the opposition. "(Should) there be changes in the Senate, that's their internal affair and the President is keeping her hands off," he said.

Angara is chair of the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino, the biggest opposition party.

Last year, he nearly succeeded in wresting the Senate presidency from administration Sen. Franklin Drilon, when independent Sen. John Osmeña bolted the administration People Power Coalition. But Ms Macapagal's appointment of then opposition Sen. Blas Ople as foreign secretary again tilted the balance in Drilon's favor.

Yesterday, another LDP member, Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, hinted at a "distinct possibility" that the Senate leadership could change on Monday, when Congress resumes.

Biazon admitted he could not say whether or not a new Senate "coup" was brewing, only because he was "not party to any (such) discussions."

But he said the LDP leadership was expected to meet in the next three days, to hear Angara's full report on the Tuesday meeting with the President.

Biazon recently turned down Ms Macapagal's offer of the top post at the Department of Public Works and Highways, vacated by new Justice Secretary Simeon Datumanong.

But following Angara's offer of support, Bunye said, it was no longer "unthinkable" for more opposition members to join the Cabinet.

"There's an even greater possibility now than ever before," he said, but again refused to confirm if the President and Angara actually discussed her reported plan to recruit oppositionists.

Angara's collaboration amply reinforces the President's efforts at pushing measures to strengthen the economy, alleviate poverty, and overhaul the judiciary.

Bunye said Ms Macapagal was specifically keen for Angara's help in passing laws to allow absentee voting, facilitate the use of farmland as collateral for bank loans, privatize the debt-strapped National Power Corp., and improve revenue collection. *With Rocky Nazareno and a report from Reuters*

War fever grips Pinoys in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Kuwait—Like tens of thousands of her countrymen, Rhodora Diaz left her native Philippines to find a job in oil-rich Kuwait and send money home to her family.

Today, along with employment as a saleswoman at a bakery, she finds herself in a potential war zone.

With the United States sending thousands more troops to Kuwait this month in the biggest buildup since the Gulf War, migrant workers who keep the economies running in the region fear being caught up in a last-ditch chemical attack by Iraq—and wonder whether they should go home.

"I think going back to the Philippines would be the safest place," Diaz, 26, said Tuesday as she headed to a remittance office to send home about 100 Kuwaiti dinars ($300) to her family back in Manila. "We really don't like to think about it."

But she has no plans to go yet. Like most foreigners who work as shop assistants, housemaids, construction workers, office staff and other professions, Diaz has adopted a wait-and-see attitude and expects to keep working unless things get "really bad."

Foreign workers make up more than half of Kuwait's 2.3 million people, taking jobs Kuwaitis either won't or aren't numerous enough to fill.

Kuwait has stepped up civil defense drills to prepare the population in case Iraq fires Scud missiles—possibly tipped with chemical warheads—at the American camps in the desert or at Kuwait City.

Embassies of the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia have been informally coordinating information on the threat, said Wongthep Arthakaivalvatee, first secretary of the Thai Embassy. Thailand has 1,500 citizens in Kuwait, most of them construction workers and mechanics.

"We don't want to get people into a panic," Wongthep said. "For an evacuation, we'd have to see clear signs of instability."

In the Philippines, remittances from overseas workers are vital. The 7.2 million Filipinos working overseas—about 10 percent of the population—contribute $6 billion to their country's economy. A special envoy from the Philippines arrived Tuesday in Kuwait to examine preparations to send the 55,000 Filipinos working in Kuwait to Saudi Arabia and other countries in the event of war.

Roy Cimatu, a retired armed forces chief of staff who heads his Foreign Ministry's Middle East preparedness team, also visit Saudi Arabia, where 850,000 Filipinos reside, and the United Arab Emirates.

"I think the government of Kuwait has made extensive preparations for all eventualities," Cimatu said. "I will relate to the families back home in our country that their loved ones are safe." AP

QC fire kills woman

A 60-YEAR-OLD woman died yesterday when fire razed a squatter colony in Cubao, Quezon City, and rendered homeless some 1,000 families.

Witnesses said a surge of electric power following an outage ignited an electric post and started the fire at 4:45 p.m.

The fire raged for two hours and ate up squatter shanties along Ermin Garcia corner Cambridge St., Barangay E. Rodriguez.

The lone fatality was identified as Juanita Albay, 60. Four others, including an elderly man and a firefighter, were injured.

Investigators said the area was hit by a power outage earlier. When the power came on, the surge ignited a electrical post near the house of a Dominador Tudla.

The fire, fanned by strong winds, spread quickly and even crossed a creek before it was put under control at 6:35 p.m., said Senior Supt. Ross Roque, chief of the BFP National Capital Region.

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No room at the top for Colonel Corpus

MILITARY intelligence chief Col. Victor Corpus is qualified to be promoted, but he cannot be named general because no position in that rank is yet vacant.

"Corpus is one of the senior colonels so definitely, if there are vacant positions, he will be recommended for that position that is vacant," Armed Forces of the Philippines spokesperson Eduardo Purificacion said.

He also said that the AFP high command was satisfied with Corpus' performance, adding that Corpus had been noted as "industrious."

The remarks came in the wake of reports that a revamp in the military leadership was to follow the retirement of several senior officers next month and that Corpus was one of those being considered to be transferred.

For his part, Lt. Col. Danilo Servando, chief of the Armed Forces' public information office, said that Corpus' current assignment, that of chief of the Intelligence Service of the AFP, was a general's position but his promotion was adversely affected by a law which limited the number of generals.

"He's qualified for promotion, but there is no vacancy. That is why we are requesting for an increase in the quota for generals. All the generals' positions have already been filled so we cannot just promote him," he said.

Department of National Defense public affairs chief Ros Manlangit confirmed yesterday that there would indeed be a reorganization of the AFP top brass. He said that the revamp would have to be approved by Malacañang.

Under the law, the number of military generals is limited to .75 percent of the officers' corps.

Servando said that the ratio, considering that the officers' corps was 12,000 strong, translated to 86 generals, the current number now serving.

The military establishment has been pushing for an increase in the number of generals to about 120 to 150. *Martin Marfil*

CORPUS: Too many generals

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Senate prepares for Erap testimony

By Volt Contreras

EX-PRESIDENT Joseph Estrada's camp is making sure no procedural kinks will again prevent him from appearing before a Senate committee investigating the controversial Napocor-Impsa power deal.

The Senate has issued a summons for Estrada to testify at a public hearing next week.

Estrada's court-appointed lawyers stepped in yesterday to help the Senate secure the Sandiganbayan's clearance for him to leave his detention suite at the Veterans' Memorial Medical Center on Jan. 14.

They filed a motion asking the special division hearing Estrada's criminal cases to order the Philippine National Police to bring Estrada to the Senate on that day.

Estrada was invited by Sen. John Osmeña, who chairs the committee, to appear in a hearing on Dec. 16. But police refused to let him leave the hospital without clearance from the special Sandigan court.

The episode led Estrada to claim the next day that the Macapagal administration was afraid of what he would divulge. He is being asked to testify about bribe allegations surrounding the controversial power contract with the Argentinian firm Industrias Metalurgicas Pescarmona Sociedad Anonima, or Impsa.

Estrada said he was offered a $14-million bribe for the contract's approval, but pointed out that the deal was finally approved not during his administration, but Ms Macapagal's. Malacañang has insisted otherwise.

The committee is expected to raise questions about the bribe offer, which the ex-president said he turned down. *With AFP*

PCSO chief fights back, sues Alcuaz for libel

By Agnes E. Donato

PHILIPPINE Charity Sweepstakes Office Chair Ma. Livia "Honeygirl" Singson-de Leon got back at PCSO Director Jose Luis "Linggoy" Alcuaz with a P50-million libel suit yesterday, a day after he filed graft charges against her.

De Leon also named former PCSO corporate secretary Cirilo Avila as respondent in the complaint she filed before the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office.

The complaint was based on newspaper accounts of a press conference called by Alcuaz last Jan. 2, which appeared the following day in three national dailies, including the INQUIRER.

In the press conference which Avila also attended, Alcuaz accused De Leon of railroading a P600-million contract in favor of certain suppliers and distributors for the latest sweepstakes game, "Cash and Car Promo."

Alcuaz also claimed that De Leon had delayed scheduled disbursements of PCSO funds and allowed the money to "rot" in the bank instead.

The PCSO chair said Alcuaz's accusations were "absolutely baseless and totally false."

Denying the alleged railroading, De Leon said the Cash and Car Promo sweepstakes had long been approved by the PCSO board of directors, including Alcuaz who, she noted, voted in favor of it.

De Leon said the Dec. 23 board meeting at the Mandarin Hotel, during which the alleged railroading took place, had been held on Alcuaz's insistence.

"During the meeting, what was approved was not the P600 million contract for the printing of the promo tickets... (but) the distribution and marketing of said tickets," De Leon recounted. "(This was because) the PCSO's marketing sector had recommended a distributor who was willing to guarantee ticket sales of 100 percent with domestic letter of credits."

She also denied delaying disbursements, as Alcuaz had alleged, for a P600-million ambulance project, P282 million for the "Ospital ni Erap" program, and another P282 million for hospital equipment.

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Drug firms warn of fake imports

DRUG companies have warned of the possible entry of fake medicines into the country if a bill liberalizing the parallel importation of medicine and other pharmaceutical products is passed into law.

The Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Association of the Philippines (PHAP) recently aired this warning in a position paper submitted to Rep. Harry C. Angping, chair of the House committee on trade and industry and one of the authors of the House bill.

The PHAP, which is composed of 88 manufacturers and distributors of medicines and medical equipment, said allowing local traders to import cheaper branded medicines may result in the flooding of the country with fake medicines.

"Cheaper imported branded medicines from countries that do not adhere to Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) laws should be suspect. Hundreds of pharmaceutical manufacturers could copy with impunity any established brand," the PHAP said.

The group added that while it supports the bill's aim of increasing the public's access to inexpensive drugs, it pointed out that the influx of imported branded medicine into the country could kill the fledging local generic industry.

"Cheaper unbranded medi-cines, which are classified as the generic equivalent of known brands, have always been available in the market. Our branded and generic products are of high quality, effective and safe," the PHAP statement read.

The group noted that local traders accredited to import drugs from abroad may cut corners just to increase their profits, particularly on storage facilities.

UAE gives 'illegals' reprieve

AROUND 5,000 overseas Filipino workers from the United Arab Emirates are expected to return to the country after the UAE government declared a four-month amnesty for all foreigners working illegally in the emirates.

The amnesty, which would be until April 30, would allow undocumented migrant workers to leave the UAE without being penalized for violation of its immigration rules.

Their employers would also be absolved from paying fines for hiring illegal workers and not reporting runaways to the government.

Labor attache to Abu Dhabi Annabella Oliveros said that inspections would be done "to force slackers to leave" and avail themselves of the amnesty.

Journal editor's wife dies

MARY Achaval Roxas, wife of Cip Roxas, executive editor of the Journal Group of Publications, died on Tuesday after a short illness.

Aside from her husband, the deceased is survived by her daughters Anne Marie and Olive; brothers Juancho and Antonio; sister Carmen and grandchildren.

Her body lies at the La Paz Memorial Chapel on Araneta Avenue in Quezon City.

Interment will be at the Manila North Cemetery after the 9 a.m. Mass on Saturday.

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Eugenia D. Apostol *Founding Chairman*

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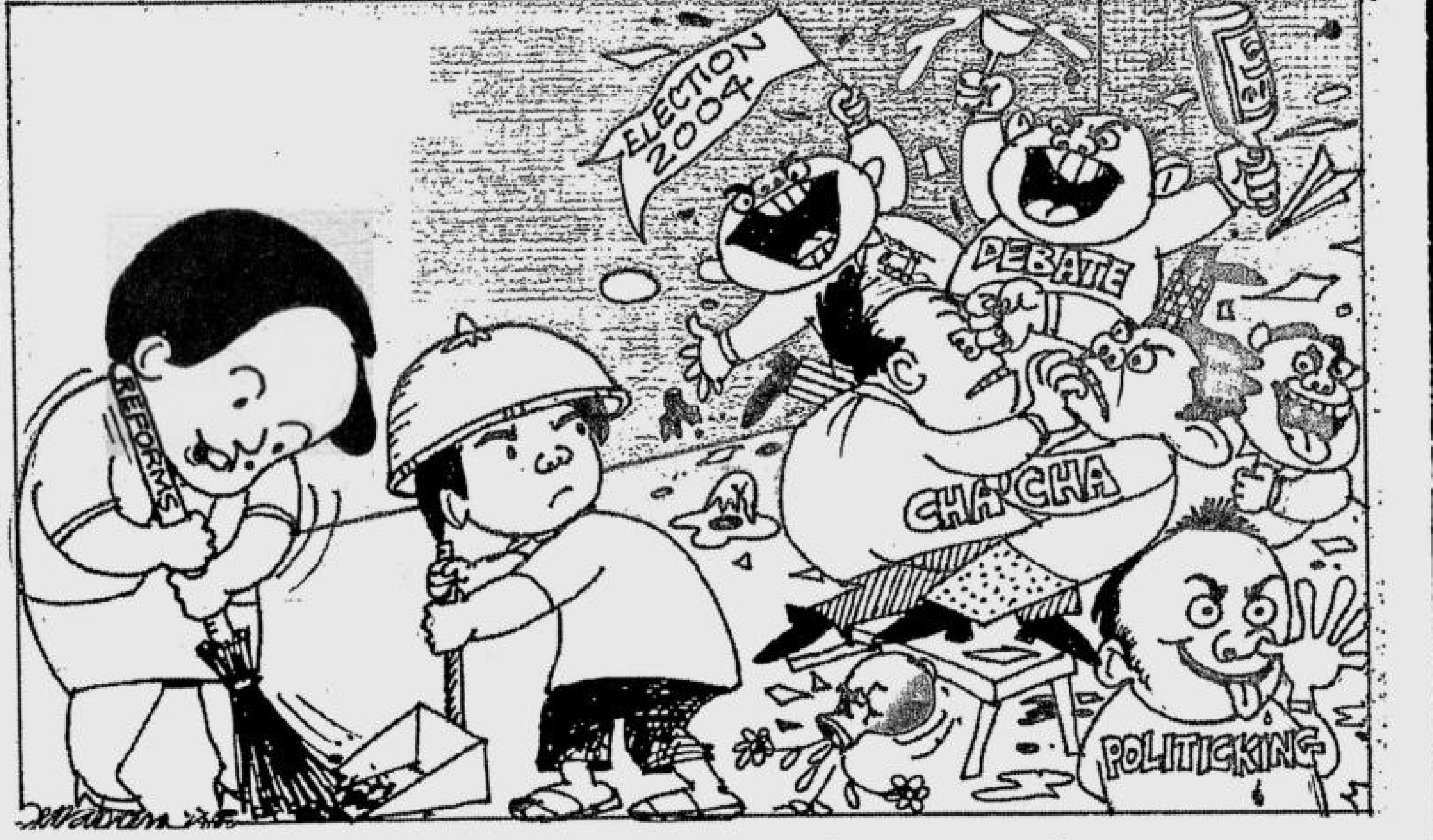

Pressure for change

EDITORIAL

THE WITHDRAWAL of President Macapagal-Arroyo from the 2004 elections has raised the profile of the movement to change the Constitution to make way for a shift from a presidential to a parliamentary system.

Shortly after her announcement, the President made a significant turnaround in her opposition to constitutional change. She said she would be "neutral" on the issue, removing an obstacle standing in the way of rewriting the Constitution, although she insisted that elections should be held in 2004.

This démarche refueled the campaign for Charter change, which has made headway in the House of Representatives where a joint resolution has been filed seeking to convene both chambers of Congress as a constituent assembly to propose amendments to the 1987 Constitution.

The President's neutrality is a key element in unlocking the gates blocking the current of constitutional revision. Although the initiative to revise the Constitution emanates from Congress, there are many ways by which the President can kill the move. For one thing, she can use her influence on the members of Congress to withdraw support or she can block the allocation of funds for a referendum on a draft constitution.

While the President's withdrawal from the presidential race has pushed forward the cha-cha project, it has also sharpened the clash between the House and the Senate over the method of revising the Constitution. A group of at least eight senators, led by Senate President Franklin Drilon, are adamantly opposed to the approach of converting Congress into a constituent assembly, a position that runs counter to the proposal embodied in the House resolution. They oppose on the grounds that this method would tarnish the revision with the self-serving interest of the members of Congress, making the Constitution unreflective of popular will.

There is, of course, a strong element of self-preservation in the senators' opposition. The shift to parliamentary system will not only abolish the Senate, it will also close the opportunities for some of the senators seeking to contest the presidential and vice-presidential elections in 2004.

Another group of nine senators favor the shift to parliamentary system, but 16 votes are needed to approve the joint resolution. With growing pressure from the House, in which there is an overwhelming majority favoring the convening of a constituent assembly, the question that arises is, how long can the Drilon group hold against this pressure?

The House wants to fast-track the revision. The plan, whose architecture was drawn by Speaker Jose de Venecia, calls for a draft constitution to be finished and a referendum to be held before 2004. Under this plan, there will be elections in 2004, but the polls will be for deputies or members of parliament from which government and the national leadership will be reformed.

Opponents of this plan have argued that now is not the time to revise the Constitution because current issues demand higher priority than tinkering with the charter. These issues, they argue, can be addressed within the framework of the 1987 Constitution.

The lamest of these arguments is one saying that revision can wait until after 2004, meaning that 2010 is the earliest it can be done. This argument has become hoary with age, and if we accept it, we will never change the Constitution.

Proponents of the fast-track approach have emphasized the urgency of the shift to the parliamentary system in a federal framework, drawing lessons from the recurrent gridlock between the legislative and the executive departments, the inflexibility of the presidential system to defuse crisis (as shown in the fall of former President Joseph Estrada) and the enormous expenses incurred in financing direct elections with an electorate of nearly 30 million people. Some have even warned of stand-offs that can invite military intervention, a phenomenon that has determined political outcomes since 1986.

The status quo has come under siege and there is increasing pressure for change. Stronger reasons are, however, needed to created a snowball for constitutional change before 2004. In the volatile political atmosphere of the run-up to the elections, political stalemates and crisis flowing from new presidential initiatives on political and economic reforms can give added urgency to the process of constitutional revision.

The mayor's plans for Manila

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

I HAVE good news and bad news. But let's save the good news for last and start with the bad news.

Manila Mayor Lito Atienza will go ahead with the construction of an office building for the city's public school teachers at the Arroceros Forest Park. (Atienza was the lone guest at last Monday's Kapihan sa Manila where he outlined his urban renewal plans under his "Buhayin ang Maynila" program.) He said the property, which was formerly the Department of Education compound, belongs to the Manila city schools which bought it with school funds. True, the Winner Foundation planted trees there, but it is acting selfishly and behaving as if it owned the place. The park is closed to the public, from whom the money to pay for it came. What good is a park if the public cannot enjoy it?

On the other hand, what he is going to do with the park is for the good of the public, Atienza said. A narrow strip of the park (along the river) will be part of riverside drives on both sides of the Pasig River all the way to Laguna Lake. That will open two additional streets to and from Manila for Metro Manilans and residents of lakeshore towns.

That's bad news for Winner Foundation but good news for the public.

Now for the really good news. In exchange for the road right of way and the area for the city school building, Atienza will add to the park the adjoining property owned by the city which is now filled with dilapidated structures and junk. The addition will be bigger than what would be taken away, so the park will end up being bigger.

Atienza also said that the city government is willing to refurbish and reopen the old Metropolitan Theater, either by itself or in cooperation with the Government Service Insurance System, which owns the building. All the city government needs is a go-signal from the GSIS. (I don't understand why the GSIS was willing to spend P50 million for a small Juan Luna painting but now refuses to invest in the Metropolitan Theater which has two big murals by national artist Fernando Amorsolo. Nobody has seen those murals in years and maybe they are being gnawed by rats.) What is the GSIS waiting for? Is it waiting for the edifice to collapse so it can sell the lot to Shoemart?

As I said in previous columns, the Metropolitan Theater and the Arroceros Forest Park are made for each other. The latter is an ideal spot for refreshments during intermissions, a sort of garden café. A refreshing place under the trees and stars to drink, have a snack and talk shop in between acts. And it's just across the street.

Also, the city needs a theater for the *masa* for its cultural soul. The Cultural Center is too elitist and high brow. The Metropolitan Theater could be the venue for a revival of unique Filipino cultural fare like the "stage shows" that became popular during the Japanese Occupation. The stage shows exhibited in many of the cinema houses entertained wartime Manila and saw the rise of the biggest names in Philippine show-biz history, including Leopoldo Salcedo, the "King of Philippine Movies"; Pugo and Togo, the No. 1 comedy team and many others. German Moreno is still doing what he used to do at the old movie house at the foot of the MacArthur Bridge.

The Metropolitan Theater is just right for the *bakya*-wearing *masa*, since it stands along both the LRT and jeepney routes. It is a short walk form Quiapo, Sta. Cruz and Binondo across the bridges. The *masa* feel embarrassed to go to the Cultural Center where they have to go by car and be dressed in formal clothes. Besides, the prices of tickets are beyond their reach and they can't understand the shows.

* * *

Across the river, Atienza plans to revive the Escolta, Manila's old business district, into a Philippine version of Hollywood with pedestrian malls and sidewalk cafés. The sidewalks will be widened to encourage walking. They will feature the imprints of the palms and footprints of movie celebrities like Hollywood's Sunset Boulevard. There will be a lifelike statue of Leopoldo Salcedo reading a newspaper on a sidewalk bench. And although the late newspaper columnist Doroy Valencia was not an actor, he would be sitting at a table, a steaming cup of coffee before him at the same spot on T. Pinpin where the old D&E Coffee Shop used to be. Pugo and Togo would be arguing at the MacArthur Bridge, with perhaps an actress, her skirt lifted by a breeze form the river ala Marilyn Moroe, sashaying by.

On the Intramuros side, the strip between the street and the river, which riverboats used for unloading their cargoes, will be converted into gaily lighted sidewalk cafés.

If the Intramuros Administration will only wake up and do its job of reviving and rebuilding the Walled City, Manila will become attractive again to domestic and foreign tourists.

Rizal and Taft Avenues, which have been effectively killed by the LRT, will be revived, Atienza said. The government will give property owners along the streets incentives to either improve their buildings or the government will take them over. Atienza will also ask the LRT management to clean and paint the undersides of the elevated tracks and light them up.

With what he has been able to do (and is still doing) in Roxas Boulevard, Liwasang Bonifacio and Plaza Miranda, Atienza is earning a lot of believers. It is now so pleasant to walk along Manila Bay, to feel the cool breeze and listen to the waves. Or sit on one of the benches and watch the world-famous Manila Bay sunset.

If the mayor can make all his plans come true (planned, by the way, by Palafox and Associates), then Manila will again become the "Pearl of the Orient."

Revolutions

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I LAUGHED my head off at a cartoon I saw last month. It was from an old Jingle magazine, a reissue actually, the Christmas season being a time to bring all those things out again. The cartoon, a local one, was titled "Generation Gap." A balding man in coat and tie tells a kid with long scruffy hair, bell-bottomed jeans and guitar in hand, "I don't like your long hair, son." The kid says back, "I hate your long Cadillac, man."

Each generation, of course, has its own generation gap—as you'll know if you've tried listening to Rage Against the Machines and Greyhoundz—but that one, I think, goes beyond a generation gap. Or so it struck me with the benefit of hindsight: the cartoon is probably 30 or so years old, done in the heat of battle, so to speak. The dialogue there doesn't just reveal a gap in taste or style or accent, it reflects an entire paradigm shift, to use a phrase that became fashionable some years ago. It reflects a monumental difference in set of beliefs.

Looking back, the deeper revolution that happened in the late 1960s and early 1970s was not the armed one launched by the activists who went to the hills and fought Marcos, it was the youth's defiance of a resolutely materialistic culture. The deeper revolution was not the movement to seize power, it was the movement to scorn acquisitiveness. The youth of the time did not just wear long hair, smoke pot and drop acid, they also questioned means and ends. Amid the seeming vapors in their brain, or probably because of them, they furiously refuted a way of life, or death, that harnessed human beings willy nilly to drive for material progress and not material progress purposefully to the needs of human beings.

John Lennon put it so well in the song, "I'm Only Sleeping": "Everybody seems to think I'm lazy/ I don't mind/ I think they're crazy/ Running everywhere at such a speed/ Till they find there's no need." Indeed, most of the songs of the Beatles subverted the philosophy that said the purpose of life was to find a useful trade. Just as well, Michelangelo Antonioni's "Zabriskie Point" supplied a powerful image for the youth's rebellion against a culture steeped in consumerism. At the end of the movie, a house and all its appliances explode in slow motion, refrigerators regurgitating its contents like drunks who have had one too many. It became the visual battle-cry, or wish fulfillment, of the age.

The movement that arose in the United States and elsewhere to protest the Vietnam War drew a great deal of its power from this attitude or outlook. The premise of that war was bequeathing to the next generation a world created after the image and likeness of America. "Not in our name," the youth of the time might have said—in the same way that the aged of our time, many of whom were probably those same youth who remained true to their dreams—are saying now in response to George Bush's impending war against Iraq. The whole culture, or counterculture, as everyone liked to call it then, called for tolerance, for individuals finding their own alternatives, for people choosing their own way of life. The idea of imposing an order on another people, one based on consumerist or materialist values, became anathema to that generation.

Indeed, the armed revolution that arose in this country and elsewhere to protest the rise of a tyrant drew a great deal of its power from this attitude and outlook. That revolution drew the best and the brightest to its ranks not just because of the depth of Marcos' iniquity but because of the extent of their willingness to "serve the people," the sublime expression of the selflessness and idealism of the age. I think the defeat of that armed movement did not start when it was pushed back by Cory's counterinsurgency campaign. It began when it substituted "serve the people" with "serve the movement" and asserted, with much coercion, that the two were one and the same. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

From where I am now, I imagine the greater loss is not the demise of the physical revolution but the death of the (counter)cultural one. I share Stephen King's sentiments completely when he says in his book, "On Writing": "I do not want to speak too disparagingly of my generation (actually I do, we had a chance to change the world and opted for the Home Shopping Network instead)."

I myself saw with blinding clarity the end of an era many years ago while a friend was interviewing a young woman for a position in an office. After my friend told the girl she would be considered for the position, she replied that she too needed the time to think about it as she had other options and wanted to be sure her choice advanced her career path. It occurred to me that the girl might actually knew exactly what kind of car and husband (probably in that order) and how many kids she was going to have over the next few years. I do not mean to disparage career-thinking among the youth, but actually I do, for life is far too precious to reduce to a parabolic curve about the future.

I know I've said in several speeches that each generation meets its own challenges and invents its own responses, but I probably must add as caveat to that that some responses are more dazzling than others. Some spirits are more revolutionary than others. The one that took hold of this country, indeed the world, 30 or so years ago was so. A spirit of relentless questioning, a refusal to be unduly yoked to creature comforts. Of course, many of those who wore long hair then and lugged a guitar have opted for long Cadillacs and a mistress in hand, becoming the ogres they set out to slay. But that's a story for another time.

Meanwhile, through my seeming sloth, I'll take the time to pine for it.

* * *

Comments to dequiros@vasia.com

Tricycle economy

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

NEW Environment Secretary Elisea Gozun blinked when hundreds of tricycle drivers rallied on Mendiola against the enforcement by the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority of the Clean Air Act which calls for a phase-out of two-stroke motorcycles. Gozun gave the drivers a one-month reprieve while the government looks for a solution that will balance the need to control the frightful pollution caused by these tricycles and the need to provide jobs to an estimated 1.02 million tricyle drivers across the nation, 120,000 of whom are in Metro Manila.

An editorial in another newspaper lamented that the activist environmentalist did not live up to expectations when she backed down, but Gozun's move is hardly surprising. The tricycle drivers' lobby is very powerful and they can blackmail the government to give in to their demands. Moreover, people have grown so dependent on these ubiquitous tricycles.

* * *

Various administrations should have anticipated that the problem of pollution in Metro Manila caused by these vehicles would become very serious.

The root cause is the fact that the government over the decades failed to help overseas Filipino workers find better opportunities for investment than operating tricycles. People with foresight have long stressed the need to give OFWs training in managing their finances and supporting small enterprises for them, but nothing of the sort was done. The first thing many OFW families did was invest their hard-earned money in tricycles. We have truly become a tricycle economy. How to stop the further proliferation of two-stroke tricycles is a big problem, but the more immediate problem is how to stop the pollution caused by all the tricycles that are already running.

* * *

Speaker Joe de Venecia told me that Tarlac Rep. Gilbert Teodoro, head of the House contingent of the Nationalist People's Coalition, called from San Francisco to ask him to stress to this column that his uncle, NPC chair Eduardo Cojuangco, has no ambition of running either for president in 2004 or for prime minister in a parliamentary government. I had reported earlier that the NPC met at Cojuangco's residence last week to deliberate on projecting him as its candidate in 2004, but other sources said he was more interested in running for prime minister in the event of a shift to parliamentary. I have doubts about Cojuangco joining the presidential race, but I'm not convinced that he won't vie if the post of prime minister becomes available. But Teodoro is denying both.

* * *

The President met with Senate opposition leader Edgardo Angara last Monday night after his arrival from a vacation in Spain. Naturally, when such leaders meet, eyebrows are raised. There's speculation that GMA is pushing Angara to replace Franklin Drilon as Senate president, but GMA has denied this publicly. Moreover, that would be difficult to carry out since Drilon's group has 13 senators, plus oppositionist Sen. John Osmeña who's loyal to Drilon. Besides, it's not to the country's advantage to rock the Senate, after so much rocking in the Cabinet.

* * *

What I hear is that the President has offered Angara a senior Cabinet post, but he turned it down, preferring to go for the Senate presidency. Senate sources note that Angara has lately been trying to woo his colleagues with offers of committee chairmanships. To accommodate GMA's "unity" drive, Angara is pushing for LDP Sen. Rodolfo Biazon to be named to a Cabinet post (reports say Biazon is being offered the public works portfolio). A reliable source says, however, that he's being invited to take the job of customs commissioner with Cabinet rank, but he's not keen on accepting it, preferring to remain in the Senate and run for reelection in 2004.

* * *

My youngest brother Benjamin Olivares, who's based in Los Angeles, came to visit over the holidays with his Russian wife, Svetlana and son Daniel, after many years' absence. He was amazed at the big changes in Metro Manila. It's refreshing to hear him praise what he has seen, considering how many of us are quite negative about our own. His family took the MRT around town and was impressed with its cleanliness and efficiency. They also loved Baguio City, especially the pine forests of Club John Hay where we had a picnic, and were impressed with the cleanliness of the public market. They also savored the beauty of Taal Lake as seen from Tagaytay Highlands.

* * *

But Boracay was the ultimate for Benjie's family. I arranged for them a stay at the lovely Sea Wind Resort, owned by my good friends Boy and Ruth Jarantilla. Benjie and Lana loved what he called "real island living" and the captivating friendliness of the people. "Forget Waikiki Beach, Tahiti or Bali. Boracay beats them all," he said.

Benjie, who is into promotions abroad, opines that what this country needs to sell its wonders is more aggressive promotions. He recalled that in Los Angeles an American friend was telling them how bad things were here and suggested that they just spend two days looking up relatives and then fly out to Bangkok or Hong Kong. The American also said that all the resorts in Palawan were closed due to terrorism. Imagine if we took his word, mused Benjie.

* * *

The regional vicar of Opus Dei, Msgr. Jose Duran, has issued invitations to a solemn eucharistic celebration in thanksgiving for the recent canonization of Opus Dei founder, St. Josemaria Escriva, and the closing of the centenary observance of his birth today. To be held tonight at 6 p.m. at the Manila Metropolitan Cathedral in Intramuros, the Mass will be concelebrated principally by Jaime Cardinal Sin and Monsignor Duran. Confessions will be heard starting at 5 p.m.

Healing without harming

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

A RECENT visitor was Dr. Peter Orris, founder of Health Care without Harm, a broad-based international campaign designed to reform the environmental practices of the health care industry.

Orris, the chief of the Division of Occupational Medicine of Chicago's Cook County Hospital, has been traveling the world since the campaign's founding in 1996, talking to doctors and other medical personnel, hospital administrators, regulators and officials about the need to "transform the health care industry worldwide, without compromising patient safety or care, so that it is ecologically sustainable and no longer a source of harm to public health and the environment."

Health Care without Harm, said Orris in a talk with this columnist, was founded after the US Environmental Protection Agency released a report citing medical waste incinerators as the primary source of dioxin air emissions. This came as a shock to the medical community, said Orris, since the industry and their profession existed precisely to heal and save lives, not harm their patients and the community.

The problem, it turned out was "a fundamental lack of awareness on the part of many care providers." But as awareness-raising efforts have escalated, majority of those Orris and other HCWH personnel have met with have shown willingness to look for ways not only to seek alternatives to incineration and cut down on the use of potentially polluting material, but also to find alternatives to these harmful substances.

Orris was in the country to address the national convention of the Private Hospitals Association Philippines (PHAP), which with its membership of 2,000 hospital owners and administrators, adopted the theme of "Health Care without Harm," to jump-start its campaign for safer waste disposal in hospitals.

"It's important that everybody gets in (the campaign)," points out Orris. "Hospitals will only get involved if they know that there is no competitive disadvantage to adopting safer alternatives if all other hospitals have joined the campaign."

* * *

THE URGENCY of the matter cannot be emphasized enough, says Eero Brillantes, coordinator for Asia of Health Care without Harm.

Greenpeace notes that while "only a small fraction of the total waste generated by health care institutions is actually infectious and/or hazardous," current disposal practices, such as incineration of wastes without segregation, results in "infecting the entire quantum of medical wastes."

In Metro Manila alone, 14 tons of hospital waste are generated daily by some 170 medical facilities, says Greenpeace. Most of these waste materials are non-infectious (such as kitchen wastes), but if infectious material is mixed and burned with them, they too become infectious.

The answer, says the environmental group, is to dispose of infectious waste through "economically viable non-burn technologies such as autoclaving and chemical disinfection."

Moreover, burning even non-harmful waste, such as plastic containers, tubes and medical instruments, produces toxic by-products. "It is the incineration of the host material—chlorinated plastics or chlorine-bleached gauze strips—that releases dioxins, furans and heavy metals, among other pollutants." Incineration, says Greenpeace, "converts a simple biological problem (infection) into a complex chemical problem."

But Orris reminds hospitals that they can begin solving the problem of harmful disposal if they would only cut down on their purchase and use of potentially polluting materials and substances.

* * *

TAKE the use of mercury, says Orris. "You can do away with its use in many applications," he says, including using mercury-free thermometers and blood pressure cuffs.

Hospitals are also seeking to reduce the overall amount of waste they generate, adds Orris. Doctors and administrators are starting to evaluate if "single-use devices," such as needles and tubes, are all that necessary. Hospital purchasing departments are actively seeking companies that can provide alternatives to such things as PVC IV bags and latex gloves.

But can and should hospitals in a Third World setting like the Philippines emulate the examples set by hospitals in the United States and other developed countries? Says Orris: "There is no reason for developing countries to repeat the mistakes [made in] developed countries. There is a way to assess the social costs and the costs to individuals [of harmful disposal] compared to the cost to the institution [to look for alternatives]."

* * *

HOSPITALS and doctors around the world have responded "amazingly and rapidly well" to the campaign, Orris observes. "I think they recognize it as good public relations. No one wants to be known as a polluter."

Perhaps the doctors, nurses and administrators recognize that ignoring the greater environmental harm done in the course of treating individual patients is shortsighted at best and criminally negligent at worst. The local chapter of Health Care without Harm warns that "more Filipinos will be born with congenital diseases and birth defects if public and private hospitals continue to use incinerators to manage their wastes." Dioxin, one of the major harmful by-products of incineration, has been shown to cause "a lifetime cancer risk that is 1,000 times higher than the 'acceptable' risk level." Birth defects, reduced fertility, immune system disorders and many forms of cancer are linked to dioxin exposure.

Indeed, what an irony that the health care system, on which we rely for good health and survival, should end up making us sicker, if not killing us in the end.

Three women towers

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

ON THE BLEAK landscape of 2002, three women towered in their respective fields because they told the truth and nothing but. That is outstanding achievement any way you look at it. They warned of impending doom and exposed wrongs in their giant organizations, sending shock waves in their country and the world. Despite the debacle and the ugly unraveling, the world has become better, safer because of them.

Time magazine's Persons of the Year are three American women: Coleen Rowley of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Cynthia Cooper of WorldCom and Sherron Watkins of Enron. "They never sought the spotlight," Time said of them, "but they believed in right and strived for high standards—even as values collapsed around them. Then they had the courage to stand alone." To stand alone—that is daunting.

Time calls them, "The Whistleblowers." These women have no love for the word but that is what they were. They told. And a frightening, terrible scenario unfolded, exposing lies, deceit, incompetence and danger. It shattered people's faith in institutions meant to protect them and make lives easier, but in the long run the individual women's insistence on the truth meant so much more. There's so much to be regained and redeemed. And the time is now.

FBI's Rowley, 48, was the one who exposed how the FBI failed to do its job, how the bureau ignored warnings from her office to take seriously the case of Zacarias Moussaoui, a French-Morroccan who had enrolled in a local flight school, hoping to fly a 747. Eight months after the 9/11 terrorist attacks that brought down the World Trade Center's twin towers, hit the Pentagon and crashed three airplanes, killing thousands of people, Rowley told what she knew to the House and Senate Intelligence Committee.

"Dear Director Mueller," Rowley wrote the FBI chief. "I feel at this point that I have to put my concerns in writing concerning the important topic of the FBI's response to evidence of terrorist activity in the United States prior to September 11th. The issues are fundamentally ones of INTEGRITY and go to the heart of the FBI's law enforcement mission and mandate..."

The pistol-packing Rowley did not seek out the media, she ran away from them. But her words leaked and what came after was an avalanche. Rowley's memo uncovered how FBI officials "glossed over" how much they knew about the possible attacks.

Cynthia Cooper, 38, of WorldCom exposed "the world's largest accounting fraud in history." WorldCom, the second largest long-distance company in the United States, started as a mom-and-pop thing that grew into a formidable telecom giant and at one time the 25th biggest company in America.

Cooper rose to become vice president of internal audit. Then last June she announced to the company board that some officials had been playing dirty with company accounting, inflating profits, duping the world into believing that WorldCom was growing in the billions. Cooper's exposé caused WorldCom to flounder and its officials to be handcuffed. Thousands of employees feared losing their jobs. WorldCom has some 62,000 employees.

Cooper and her team worked hard and secretly into the night to get at the truth. It was a painful truth that they found. "There have been times," said Cooper, "that I could not stop crying." She felt like she was in a dark place, she said, and she read and reread Psalm 23.

WorldCom did not go down, it is making a turnaround despite all the loss.

Sherron Watkins, Enron vice president, exposed "an elaborate accounting hoax" in the giant energy company in Congress, indicting several top company executives. Watkins "explained the intricacies of the financial schemes that allowed the energy giant to conceal billions of dollars of debt in dubious partnerships."

Enron was the seventh largest company in America in 2000 and its monumental growth gave its officials a kind of lifestyle that was to be envied.

Enron has collapsed in a cataclysmic way, its famous tilted E that adorned its headquarters has been auctioned off. The fallout from the accounting scandal is staggering: 22,000 claims totalling $400 million, from investors and ex-employees.

While the process of discovering and uncovering the stink as told by Time is riveting indeed (Time had earlier devoted an issue to Rowley's testimony on the FBI's failure), it is the portrait of the trio as women, wives, mothers and career officials that makes the cover story even more interesting.

Time came out with three stories for the three women: "The Special Agent" (Rowley) by Amanda Ripley and Maggie Sieger; "The Night Detective" (Cooper) by Ripley; and "The Party Crasher" (Watkins) by Jodie Morse and Amanda Bower, plus a Q&A where the three threw in answers to interview questions. They were all gathered in Minneapolis where they met one another for the first time.

Who are these women? Time asked. "For starters, they aren't people looking to hog the limelight. All initially tried to keep their criticisms in-house, to speak truth to power but not to Barbara Walters. They became public figures only because their memos were leaked."

All three grew up in small towns and are firstborns. All are married and are chief breadwinners. Cooper and Rowley's husbands are full-time stay-at-home dads.

Along with the things that Watkins packed before leaving the company were Enron note pads with the words of Martin Luther King Jr.: "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."

Read Time's Jan. 6, 2003 double issue. I lost my subscription copy along with my 2001 Honda that was stolen on Dec. 28 so I had to buy another. I continue to smile and I will not be silent. Calling Task Force Limbas!

* * *

Send comments to cerespd@info.com.ph

Way to the iron

YOUNG BLOOD

Gerome Lorenzo

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

IN SPITE of all the things I had heard about the chaos in certain places of Mindanao, I took a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity of embarking on a journey to one of these so-called "tension areas," a place known for harboring bandits and hostages, for bombings and other violent activities. This is the island province of Basilan, a Yakan word meaning the "way to the iron." Now, every time I hear news about violence erupting in Basilan, I cannot help but recount what I learned and what I experienced 10 months ago in this often feared and less traveled area. Here's my story:

Approximately 100 meters across the pier in Isabela, the capital of Basilan, lies a village inhabited by a large number of Muslims mostly from the Yakan and the Samal ethnic groups. When I first set my eyes on the place, I was amazed to see houses perched just above the water. The houses stood on old tree trunks driven into the bottom of the sea.

Coming to this unsophisticated village, I must now admit, I felt anxious and a bit fearful because of so many prejudices I was carrying in my head. After all, the village was reputed to be a haven of thieves, robbers and troublemakers.

But to my surprise, the moment we entered the place, the inhabitants welcomed us and said with sincerity and humility, "*Assalamu alaikum* (Peace be with you)" and I had to reply immediately, "*Allaikomis salaam* (Peace be upon you, too)."

It was there that I first observed that fine gesture of welcome where one puts one's hand on the chest after a handshake and makes a slight bow with the head. This is their way of showing a guest that he is being received as a new friend.

Because of the vast fishing grounds extending from the Sulu Straight, to the Moro Gulf and on to the Sulu and Celebes Seas, the people's main source of livelihood is fishing. And this proximity to the sea has also led to their unique and curious lifestyle.

For instance, when I asked my Muslim host where I could go for my morning ritual, he led me to a room in a corner that was closed. I looked around but I could not find a toilet bowl, a lavatory, or even water faucet. There were only two holes on the floor—one big and the other small. Then it dawned on me that this was how one relieved himself in these parts, with all the waste going directly to the sea.

I asked whether this practice was not harmful to marine life. They smiled and replied that human waste was rich food for the fishes.

That night, we had fried fish freshly caught in the waters nearby for our dinner. And it tasted delicious.

A few days after my arrival, my host invited me to watch a movie. When we reached a neighbor's house, the small receiving room was already filled with people. They were all seated on the floor, waiting for an old VHS to start playing. It was only with some difficulty that I found a place to sit among the men, women and children who had gathered to watch the film. With the temperature rising in that small crowded room that was poorly ventilated, the men started to take off their shirts so that they would feel more comfortable.

The film being shown that afternoon was an old Indian movie. Probably no one understood a single word in the dialogue, but that didn't spoil the fun for everyone there. They were laughing, talking and simply enjoying each other's company while watching the film. It dawned on me then that it didn't really matter whether or not they understood the movie. The occasion was a time for bonding and camaraderie.

One night, as I was walking along a narrow path, I was struck by the simplicity of the people living in the village. Just minutes after sunset, everyone seemed to be preparing to sleep. Some would sit by their doorstep, with only the light of solitary candle behind them, to soak in the cool air and talk about their day. Some women fed their children, while others played cards to while the time away. Others were content to just be together as a family, enjoying their blessing in silence. To me, all this was love manifested in its purest form.

At night I would lie on the floor, gazing at the stars, feeling the coolness of the sea breeze and pondering deeply upon the sad fate of these people who were often being treated with suspicion and practically spurned by the rest of Philippine society because of the wrongdoing of a few of their kind. And yet the fact was that the majority of Muslims were good, like the people whom I met in this poor, yet enchanting village in Basilan.

In the mornings when I walked among the children, they would approach without fear or apprehension even if I talked, dressed and acted differently from the adults they knew. These children didn't have any opportunity to get a good education and they might not have known what Jollibee or McDonald's was, but it was obvious that at an early age they already had the right values and looked at others without discrimination.

My sojourn in Basilan took me to other villages in Isabela and Lamitan. While I expected to see tanks and heavily armed soldiers anytime, I never encountered any of these signs of war. What I got plenty of was an overwhelming display of acceptance and friendliness among the Muslims.

What I discovered in Basilan was a place that was full of beauty, with a cool climate and rich natural resources. Most importantly, my brief stay gave me the opportunity to learn that despite the diversity of our religions, cultures and lifestyles, we share a common humanity, common dreams and a common quest for acceptance and love. That journey led me to enlightenment and made me appreciate deeper my own faith. No wonder they call the place "Way to the Iron."

I hope to be back and learn from them some more. *Insha Allah* (God willing).

Gerome Lorenzo, 25, works as a campus minister in Xavier University-Ateneo de Cagayan in Cagayan de Oro City.

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Ensuring compliance with Clean Air Act

HOW can you explain to a hungry man the good effects of the Clean Air Act?

You can't! In his mind lingers the fact that he does not have any means of feeding his family without being able to operate his tricycle or jeepney. Poverty is and will remain the major obstacle to every change this country would like to implement.

I believe there are three ways to successfully implement the Clean Air Act.

First, subsidize the prices of spare parts so that tricycle, jeepney and bus operators can afford to make their vehicles comply with the regulations of the Land Transportation Office.

Second, reduce the tariffs on all imported and locally produced vehicles and spare parts that are needed to comply with these regulations.

And third, strictly implement the Clean Air Act after a reasonable period has been given for everyone to comply.

What I despise most are the entrepreneurs who try to cling on to these small operators to escape the extra expense or operating costs. These people can afford to make the necessary changes so that their vehicles will comply with the Clean Air Act but they give many reasons for not doing so. These are the same people whose children ride in air-conditioned cars and never get affected by the deteriorating quality of air in this country.

We must have the political will to implement what we believe is best for this country. Poverty must not be the reason to remain stagnant and be swallowed by the things we despise most. Poverty must be our inspiration to get our act together and make this country a better and safer place to live in.

—NOEL CARPIO,
1 Molave St., Ramax Subdivision,
Quezon City 1100

Figuring out the essential Pimentel

THIS pertains to the article on "presidential timber" of Asuncion David Maramba (PDI, 1/5/03) which contained this one-liner about Sen. Aquilino Q. Pimentel: "With him, how does one know where the wind blows?"

If there is any politician who considers his ideals and principles larger than his own political ambitions, or who regards the same as his greatest strength and arsenal, and quixotically stands up against and even fights the winds, it is Sen. Aquilino Q. Pimentel Jr.

The winds of adversity, which is the hallmark of Pimentel's record, have made him predictably consistent. Martial law saw him imprisoned four times. Cory Aquino, for all her vaunted magic and persuasive power, could not influence his assertion of Philippine sovereignty over the US bases.

Who would dare prosecute doggedly the perpetrators of *"dagdag-bawas"* for the sake of honest, orderly, peaceful and credible elections if not Pimentel? Or unearth, in Senate hearings, scams and scandals and indict his friends like President Ramos and Vice President Laurel?

Pimentel has always fought graft and corruption in government since his days as Cagayan de Oro city mayor. He has been in the forefront of pursuing the rights of business against government impositions; in championing the cause of local government units against overcentralization; in fighting for federalism as the most logical answer to the Moro rebellions; in defending generic drugs over expensive medical brands; in espousing a civilian rather than military-led government.

As far as I know, Pimentel was the first to ask President Macapagal-Arroyo to renounce any intention to run for president in 2004, an advice which she took to heart and for which she has earned the applause of the people.

As a politician, Pimentel is regarded as the exception rather than the rule. He is decent, trustworthy, competent and his probity is beyond reproach. He has not changed party affiliations since he embraced and co-founded PDP-Laban more than two decades ago.

As Senate impeachment clerk of court and Senate secretary, I remember that immediately before Clarissa Ocampo testified, I was led to a corner by Senators Teofisto Guingona and Raul Roco. One of them asked me: *"Anong hangin ang dumapi kay* Nene *at siya'y nagkakaganyan? Saan ba siya"* (What kind of wind has influenced Nene to act that way? Where does he stand)? The other glared, then smiled and said: *"Tunay ba siyang* street parliamentarian and freedom fighter? *Akala ko kakampi. Ano ba siya talaga?"* (Is he a real street parliamentarian and freedom fighter? I thought he is with us.) Or words to that effect.

I remember blurting out: "Nene Pimentel is not independent-minded. He is fiercely independent-minded."

—LUTGARDO B. BARBO,
Ateneo School of Government,
Rockwell Center, Makati City

Filipino habits that turn foreigners off

IT'S common knowledge that the Philippines is a poor performer when it comes to attracting tourists to the country, even in the best of times, with or without the threat of terrorism. Perhaps part of the reason is the differences in culture, as there are a number of Filipino habits that are considered rude by American standards.

For example, I've noticed during my 10 years of living in the Philippines (I'm an American) that many Filipinos often spit in public. It's done so often that one must assume it's part of the culture. It is also nauseating to see Filipinos hold one side of their nose while they blow the mucous out of the other side. It's also irritating to have cigarette smoke blown in your face, which occurs often (one man told me in a jeepney when I asked him to stop smoking that "It's the Filipino tradition to smoke in public vehicles"). Many Filipino men also urinate in public, and a lot of potential American tourists would not like to have their children see this.

Many Filipinos also cut in on lines (queues) a lot. Whenever I get into a line at a store or elsewhere, I always check to see who's in front of me. If I look the other way and another person cuts in in front of me, I ask him to leave.

It can also be irritating to make phone calls in the Philippines, as many Filipinos have rude telephone manners. For example, they often hang up the phone if they don't immediately understand what you're saying, or they send you to another phone where no one answers it.

The Philippines also isn't a good place for animal lovers to visit. In America, animals are treated with kindness, but in the Philippines animals are treated badly. For example, it can be heartbreaking to see so many hungry kittens roam the streets here.

It's also irritating to hear so many people honk their horns while driving. In America, car horns are used only in critical situations.

Anyway, these irritants can be a deterrent to tourism in the Philippines, since many people return to their countries and talk about what they saw and experienced in the Philippines.

—DAVID GONZALES,
dgonzales11@hotmail.com

What's happening to Parañaque?

IN RECENT years residents of Parañaque have been complaining about how the quality of their lives has deteriorated. My friend from Fourth Estate Village said that incidents of theft in her area have risen sharply. People at my office have had first-hand experience with holdups and snatchings in jeepneys on Sucat Road. It seems that economic conditions have turned for the worse, forcing some to take desperate measures i.e. stealing from honest, working-class people who are getting paranoid about taking public transportation.

A woman who pays her property tax at the *munisipyo* complained that garbage was not being collected anymore from her residence in Gatchalian Village. I also have the same grievance. Authorities have banned us from dumping our trash on Sucat without any alternative measures, forcing the residents of our subdivision to burn their trash in vacant lots.

Now we're sentenced to slow death from constant smoke inhalation from burning garbage resulting in watery eyes, asthma, migraine and coughing inside our homes.

Even paying property taxes has become a cause of grief because of the grossly inefficient system of payment at the *munisipyo*.

Who should answer for these grievances of Parañaque's taxpayers? I wish those elected officials from this city would come out of their air-conditioned homes and SUVs to smell the air and walk the streets of Parañaque and find out for themselves the many problems plaguing the city.

—NAME WITHHELD ON REQUEST

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Pinoy time warps

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

"'TIS the season to be merry. . ."

Recognize that Christmas carol? Yes, it was still playing on one of the cable TV channels the other day, the background music to text messages being exchanged on screen, offering cellphones, pets and dates.

Yup, only in the Philippines. We first hear the Christmas carols around September, and then they just seem to keep going late into January, until Valentine sob songs take over. Even then, don't be surprised to see Merry Christmas buntings still hanging around, or light displays of Santa dashing through the snow.

Our rather lengthy Christmas, starting prematurely and never really ending, is only one of the more visible examples of Pinoy time warps. And with our dismal economy and politics, who am I to protest if people want to keep the merry season a year-long affair?

But I worry about other time warps which have adverse consequences. Here's one typical scene: You see a poster on a store window with some special offer. You go in, excited and ask about the product, and the salesclerk gives you that perplexed look, "What sale?"

In exasperation, you point out they have a poster outside showing the item. She checks and laughs, *"Ay wala na 'yan,"* and to make you feel really stupid, she adds, *"Matagal na."* (No, we don't offer it anymore...and it's been a while.) You go up close to see the fine print on the poster and read: "Offer Expires Nov. 30, 1999."

Sure, the poster may be from the last century but it's a pretty one, so maybe that's why they kept it up. Or maybe, as you realize all their posters are old, they just needed sun shades.

It's usually the smaller stores that cling to the past. The bigger firms have an equally bad habit, and this is advertising goods and services that are not yet available. Full-page newspaper ads and huge colorful posters are printed, supplemented by endless blurbs on radio and television. But if you ask at the stores, the salesclerks and owners will again shrug their shoulders. Those who already have the posters up will claim no stocks have been sent. In other cases, the owners are shocked to find their store name listed in the newspaper ad—"We weren't informed."

They'll continue to run the ads, again sometimes past the date of validity, but the mystery goods never appear. I can tell you I spotted a perfect Christmas gift for my mother in a newspaper ad in November last year, complete with the names of the stores that supposedly carried it. It's now January and none of the stores have it.

All this time warp is, quite simply, bad business. In many other countries, you have to honor any offer to sell, whether made through a poster, an ad or even an Internet announcement. The American airline, United, got into trouble last year when it inadvertently posted an offer on their website for tickets at $5. Quite a few people took up the offer before United realized their error and corrected the website, but the airline had to honor the $5 purchases already made.

An even more serious type of time warp is the way we create deadlines, only to break them. We're actually quite good at creating work schedules, what with our GANTT charts showing monthly, even weekly breakdowns of what you hope to accomplish and who are assigned particular tasks. But when it comes to implementation, the schedules aren't better than wall décor.

Complicating matters, government agencies try to build political capital by announcing these deadlines. I see a painful example every time I drive toward Pasig. As you approach the Ortigas-Edsa intersection, the traffic piles up, the result of never-ending construction work going on around the flyover.

A few meters before the intersection, as you stew in the traffic, you can read a billboard announcing that this is "A project of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo," with her photograph and the caption "GMA Cares." The billboard explains that this is a "seismic retrofitting" project that began in December 2001. Yes, 2001.

I remember early in 2002, the billboard had, in bold capitals, claimed they had a "Target Completion Date" of October 2002. I thought 10 months was a ridiculously long time for the "retrofitting" or whatever they were doing, but okay, live and let live. October came and went. We're now in January 2003 and if you look at the billboard, "October 2002" has conveniently been painted over—without a new target completion date filled in.

Yes, yes, there ought to be a law. There is, actually. Government contracts have clauses which say the contractor is liable to pay a certain percentage of the project cost for each day—you read right, each day—of delay in completion. But the clause is never enforced and the reason is simple: most contractors can claim the project was delayed because the government agency did not release the first installment, not to mention, the second and third ones, on time.

Yes, the financial release dates are also on the contract, which is sometimes signed by the government official around the time when the final payment was due. And no, there is no clause to protect the contractors; they can't ask the government to pay them for time lost, opportunity costs, etc.

And so we go on merrily with our time warps. It's not as simple a matter as procrastination and the *mañana* habit. There's more to all this. Maybe, even as watches become more affordable, we've lost all sense of time.

I have that creeping suspicion every day as I drive down C.P. Garcia Street inside the UP Diliman campus, where they've started a construction project which has worsened the previously bad traffic in the area. To console motorists and commuters, the public works people have put up a huge billboard announcing this will connect eventually to C-5.

Yes, the billboard has the standard captions "Project Start Date" and "Target Completion Date." But wait, rather mysteriously, both have been left blank. The ultimate time warp: no beginning, no end.

The first time I saw the billboard last month, I distinctly heard musical notes dancing in my head, going ting, ting, ting, ting, ting, ting, ting, ting. Nope, they weren't notes from a Christmas carol. Remember the theme from "The Twilight Zone"?

* * *

Comments to miguel@pinoykasi.net

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

US offers talks; North Korea remains defiant

SEOUL, Jan 8—North Korea accused the United States on Wednesday of increasing the danger of war on the Korean peninsula, just hours after Washington changed tack and signaled a willingness to talk about their nuclear standoff.

The reclusive communist state's KCNA news agency made no mention of the US offer, nor of the UN watchdog's deadline for it to readmit nuclear inspectors within weeks, but decried Washington's "racket of a nuclear threat".

The US administration, which had previously insisted North Korea roll back recent steps to revive its nuclear weapons plans before any talks, announced its new position on Tuesday after holding talks in Washington with South Korea and Japan.

But it insisted that it would not allow North Korea's nuclear program to become a bargaining chip. Pyongyang has threatened war in the event of US economic sanctions over the issue.

"The 'nuclear issue' that renders the situation on the Korean peninsula strained is a product of the US strategy to dominate the world whereby it is working hard to bring a holocaust of a nuclear war to the Korean nation, calling for a pre-emptive nuclear strike after deploying lots of nuclear weapons in and around South Korea," KCNA said.

Meanwhile, in further diplomatic efforts to end the crisis, a South Korean presidential envoy, Yim Sung-joon, was due at the White House on Wednesday while US Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly, who led Tuesday's talks with South Korean and Japanese officials, was to visit Asia at the end of the week.

"The United States is willing to talk to North Korea about how it will meet its obligations to the international community," the three countries said in a joint statement.

"However, the US delegation stressed that the United States will not provide *quid pro quos* to North Korea to live up to its existing obligations."

The United States has branded North Korea part of an "axis of evil" along with Iraq and Iran and believes it to be building nuclear weapons but has ruled out a military attack.

North Korea's riposte is that Washington is the world's biggest producer and seller of weapons of mass destruction.

South Koreans have been less worried about a perceived North Korean threat than some of their Western allies because they have lived with Pyongyang's bombastic rhetoric for half a century.

"What is more serious to us is a war over Iraq because of what it will do to oil prices," said Chung Doo-sun, a fund manager with CJ Investment Trust Management.

"War in Iraq is an uncontrollable risk to us. In whatever direction the North Korean issue is developing, we know it will not lead to a war."

North and South Korea are technically still at war because the truce that ended their 1950-53 conflict never led to a peace treaty, but both look forward to eventual reunification of a country which dates back some 5,000 years.

"People do not think that there is going to be a war in the Korean peninsula," a Unification Ministry official told Reuters.

"People want to solve this issue through dialogue or other peaceful tactics, not through military force."

South Korea's benchmark stock index stayed steady in the morning, partly on the US comments on North Korea, but slipped in the afternoon. The South Korean won was slightly lower but North Korea was not a factor, dealers said.

KCNA reported that more than 100,000 residents of the North's capital, Pyongyang, massed on Tuesday to show support for Kim Jong-il's leadership on the 55th anniversary of the founding of the DPRK—the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

A banner in the square, which is named after Kim Il-sung, Kim's late father and the state's founder, summed up sentiment.

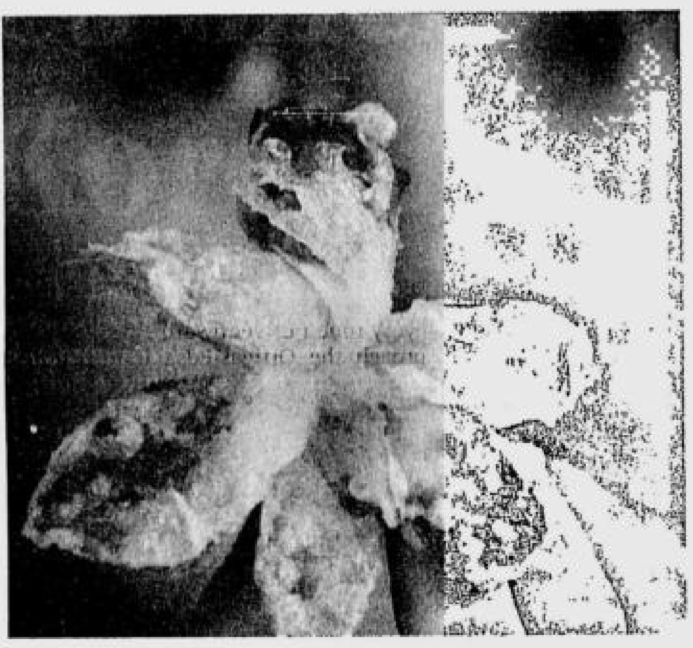
"Let's make a great victory this year . . . the 55th anniversary of DPRK establishment on the back of a god-like leader."

North Korea denounced Japan, meanwhile, for meddling in its business.

"The nuclear crisis on the Korean peninsula arose because of the United States and it has nothing to do with Japan," the South's Yonhap news agency quoted Pyongyang Radio as saying. *Reuters*

HAZARDOUS TO HEALTH AP

An unidentified woman shows off the look of hip hugger jeans at a local Edmonton women's clothing shop Jan. 7. Ontario Dr. Malvinder Parmar has discovered that the tight, low-rise trousers can be added to history's long list of fashion health hazards. He said hip-huggers compressed important nerve routes and produced "paresthesia"—a burning, tingling sensation.



VEGETARIAN'S TEMPURA

A Thai woman shows a piece of orchid tempura at a restaurant at the Rose Garden resort in Nakhon Pathom province, Jan. 8. Thailand is known for its street stalls which sell fried scorpions and other creepy-crawlies, but the resort here is catering to vegetarians with exotic tastes—by serving up fried orchids, roses and bougainvillea. AFP

Britain sends troops, ships to Gulf

LONDON—Britain Wednesday accelerated preparations for possible war with Iraq, mobilizing 1,500 reservists and sending naval vessels towards the Gulf in support of US troops already in the region.

In Washington, US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said war was not yet inevitable and urged Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to avoid it by stepping down, as Baghdad again claimed UN weapons inspectors were actually spies.

Defense Secretary Geoff Hoon told parliament Britain would deploy a naval force of 3,000 marine commandos, and had plans to call up further reservists and deploy extra vessels in the coming weeks.

But in an interview late Tuesday, Hoon told the BBC war against Iraq would not automatically be prevented if a report from UN arms inspectors scheduled for Jan. 27 reveals Baghdad is not developing nuclear, biological and chemical arms.

Jan. 27 "is an important date but it is not the only date that's relevant," Hoon said.

Britain so far has announced its naval force deployed to the region will include 15 surface vessels and one nuclear-powered submarine.

For his part, Rumsfeld said the US military buildup in the Gulf—with deployment of an amphibious assault group of some 2,200 Marines and a giant hospital ship already announced—means the use of force against Iraq is possible but not inevitable. *AFP*

US authorities to launch hunt for heir to Max Factor empire

LUSTER

LOS ANGELES—US authorities were Tuesday poised to launch a worldwide manhunt for the heir to the Max Factor cosmetics empire after he disappeared midway through his trial for allegedly drugging and raping women.

Police in Ventura County, north of Los Angeles, said the Federal Bureau of Investigation had taken charge of the hunt for multi-millionaire Andrew Luster, after he failed to show up Monday for the continuation of his trial.

"Mr. Luster is still missing and we are pretty certain that he has fled and that he won't come back," said Ventura County Sheriff's Department spokesperson Eric Nishimoto.

"At this point we are assuming that the search for him will be at least nationwide and probably global, which is why we have now involved the FBI in tracking him."

But officials were confident they would be able to find the 39-year-old great-grandson of Hollywood make-up mogul Max Factor.

"We are pretty certain that we will be able to find him as while he may have any number of places he is likely to go, he will have to leave some sort of a trail," Nishimoto said.

Despite Luster's absence, his trial on 87 counts linked to the alleged "date rapes" of three women who claim that Luster drugged before sexually assaulting them, continued in his absence Tuesday.

A day earlier, Ventura County Superior Court Judge Ken Riley branded Luster a fugitive and issued a non-bail warrant for his arrest while ordering the trial to continue.

Luster, who was under house arrest on $1-million bail, vanished Friday, taking with him his car, warm weather clothes, his dog and a collection of precious Indian artifacts, police said.

The bachelor surfer—who lives off real estate investments and a family trust—disappeared despite having had to surrender his passport as part of his and wear an electronic ankle bracelet bail conditions.

Luster—who was arrested in July 2000 after a young woman accused him of spiking her drink and raping her—posted bail after bail was lowered from $1 million from $10 million on appeal.

"Obviously we felt at the time that there was a concern that he was a flight risk and apparently that is exactly what he ended up doing," Nishimoto said.

Father-of-two Luster stands charged with using the date-rape drug gammahydroxybutyrate, or GHB, to render three women immobile before allegedly sexually assaulting them.

He has pleaded not guilty to all 87 counts that include rape and sexual assault. If convicted, he would face life in prison.

GHB is a colorless, odorless liquid that lowers inhibitions and can cause blackouts.

Police found homemade videos allegedly showing Luster in sexual encounters with apparently unconscious women, as well as vials of clear liquid, cocaine and 13 illegal firearms inside Luster's luxury home.

His trial began in December and has included testimony from one of his alleged victims as well as videotapes of alleged rapes and assaults. Luster has maintained that any sex was consensual.

His lawyer Roger Diamond took issue with the judge's terming of his client as a fugitive and insisted that something must have happened to him, including a possible kidnapping.

The fugitive is the son of the grand-daughter of Max Factor, who built up a global cosmetics empire after starting out as an immigrant making up film stars of the silent era of movies.

Factor launched his movie make-up products in the 1920s and soon became an industry staple before expanding his line to cater to women in the general public, who were beginning to use make-up for the first time.

The magnate's son, Max Factor Jr. sold the business to global pharmaceutical and cosmetics giant Proctor and Gamble for $480 million in 1973 after younger family members declined to take over the business. *AFP*

PHILHEALTH *Advisory*

No.01-002-03

For all accredited health care providers

This advisory intends to clarify the use of the PhilHealth Identification Number (PIN) of members in their claims for Medicare benefits at the hospital level.

We earlier issued Circular No. 25, s-2002, dated August 1, 2002 requiring all members and employers to use their PhilHealth identification numbers (PIN & PEN) to expedite their transactions with us effective January 1, 2003.

If, however, the PIN is not yet available, the SSS or GSIS number of the member may instead be used provided that all other required documents as applicable are submitted. As such, all accredited health care providers are advised to process the member's claim for Medicare benefits.

We also call on our partner providers to please encourage our members to make use of or indicate their PIN on their claim applications for faster processing of their documents.

Similarly, PhilHealth members who have not been issued their PIN yet are advised to register with and secure their PIN at the nearest PhilHealth office as soon as possible.

PhilHealth
Your Partner in Health

Across the NATION

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NPAs target gov't execs, cops with drug links

BUTUAN CITY—Communist rebels have vowed to execute this year top government and police officials they accused of being involved in the proliferation of illegal drugs in the Caraga Region.

Jorge Madlos, spokesperson of National Democratic Front—Mindanao Commission, said guerrilla units have already confirmed the involvement, either as protectors or drug lords, of government and police officials.

Madlos refused to identify the officials.

"We can't let them pass. The revolutionary movement can't tolerate this," he told a local radio station here.

Madlos added that he was confident that New People's Army guerrillas can go after the targets because the "wings of the revolutionary movement are going stronger."

Chief Supt. Alberto Olario, police chief for the Caraga Region, said the declaration was anti-people and inhuman.

Olario said only courts can decide on the guilt of government officials involved in crime.

"The rebels are not in the position to judge," he said.

But Olario would not deny that some of his men were involved in illegal drugs. *Franklin Caliguid, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Doc declared 2001 poll winner 16 months before next polls

By Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—The Regional Trial Court has unseated a mayor of a southern town in Leyte, sixteen months before the 2004 elections.

RTC Judge Buenaventura Pajaron of Branch 10 nullified on Tuesday the proclamation of Mayor Valentine Adolfo of Mayorga town, about 48 kilometers from here.

Pajaron, instead, declared on Tuesday Zenaida Doria as the "rightful winner" of the mayoral race in Mayorga town during the May 2001 elections.

Pajaron asked Adolfo to vacate the mayor's office and to relinquish its functions and duties to Doria.

Doria, a doctor of medicine by profession, expressed jubilance during the promulgation on Tuesday, saying she finally claimed victory after more than a year of waiting.

"I knew that I won during the elections. That is why I pursued my electoral protest against him," she told the INQUIRER.

Doria served as the mayor of Mayorga from 1995 to 2001.

Gerino Oriel, Doria's legal counsel, said they would file a motion of execution on Friday before Judge Pajaron so that Doria could assume her post as mayor of Mayorga.

Adolfo, however, was visibly dismayed by the decision. He declined to issue any statement and immediately boarded his car along with his supporters after the promulgation was made.

Eduardo Polistico, legal counsel of the ousted mayor, told reporters here that he would first consult his client before taking the next move.

Under the Rules of Court, Adolfo can elevate his case before the Supreme Court.

In his 84-page decision, Judge Pajaron said Doria won by 121 votes after 259 ballots were discovered to have been tampered with by Adolfo's camp during the recount of the votes.

"Electoral irregularities and fraudulent acts were perpetrated by the protestee (Adolfo), his cohorts and his rabid supporters" during the elections, the court decision said.

The 259 tampered ballots came from nine polling precincts in the town. Mayorga has a total of more than 5,000 registered voters and 37 polling precincts.

Group of nuns proposes feminist education to fight Church abuses

DAVAO CITY—A nuns' group in Mindanao has recommended feminist education among sisters and women who work for the Church as a "deterrent to sexual abuse committed by either our brothers and sisters inside the Church."

The recommendation came after the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) said nuns in the country are less prone to abuses by priests compared to their counterparts in the United States.

A recently released study showed that 40 percent of nuns in the United States had been abused by priests or other nuns.

The Sisters Association in Mindanao (Samin), a group of religious women representing 40 congregations in Mindanao, confirmed that there were indeed cases of sexual abuse of nuns committed by priests in the Philippines, and urged the Church hierarchy to investigate the incidents "for appropriate response."

Sr. Mary Antonietta Go, RGS, executive secretary of Samin, said a "conservative culture is not necessarily a long-term deterrent to sexual abuses" by priests or fellow nuns.

On the contrary, Go said, the conservative Filipino culture is patriarchal which "bolsters machismo" and "fortifies power relations" even inside the Church.

"And church people are not secluded nor exempted from being victims or perpetrators, they being products of society and culture," Go, in a statement, added.

"A deeper awareness of our womanhood and gender rights is a stronger safeguard against sexual discrimination and maltreatment," she said in her statement.

Samin on Nov. 12 last year submitted to CBCP president Archbishop Orlando Quevedo recommendations for Church action on sexual abuses committed by church people against nuns and the laity.

Samin's recommendations included the following:

- That church people committing sexual abuse be meted disciplinary action rather than be given "cosmetic correction" like transfer of assignment, further studies abroad and similar moves. She said those found guilty should be divested of their priestly faculties and their religious vows.
- That the Church leadership provide mechanisms to pay damages to victims, ensure the security of the victims and work for the physical and emotional rehabilitation of survivors. The Church, she said, should also support legal action against perpetrators.
- That the Church leadership take a firm stand in cases of confirmed sexual abuse, and uphold the welfare of victims and provide mechanisms to investigate, discern and determine the truth. *Nico Alconaba, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

BUSS
President Macapagal-Arroyo is mobbed by women from Barangay Lumbao in Bayabao, Lanao del Sur during her visit there as 2002 ended and shortly before she declared she was not running for president in 2004.

JERRY CARUAL/MALACAÑANG PHOTO

ROUNDUP

Erratum

IN THE STORY "A shocker in Baguio, disasters in C. Luzon" which appeared in the INQUIRER Northern Luzon on Wednesday, Pampanga Vice Gov. Juan Miguel 'Mikey' Arroyo and his wife Angela Montenegro were inadvertently described as "first cousins." They are second cousins. We regret the error.

Bridges rehabilitated

TUGUEGARAO CITY—At least 10 bridges here, mostly built during the Spanish and American periods, have been rehabilitated and are now open to traffic, an accomplishment Cagayanos will remember of President Macapagal-Arroyo. Punte Labato and Burokbok in Barangay Namabbalan are possibly the oldest in southern Cagayan that have been rehabilitated. Other bridges repaired include one in Barangay Gozi-Libag and another in Alimanao, one in Iguig, two in a nearby town and one in Aparri. *Estanislao Caldez, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Rob suspects nabbed

CAMP OLIVAS, Pampanga—Three suspected members of a highway robbery gang said to be behind the spate of robberies on the Maharlika Highway from Bulacan to Nueva Ecija were arrested on Monday in Gapan City. The arrest of Elgie Caparas, 23; Edwin Reyes, 24; and Samuel Causapin, 24, came on the heels of a tip from a resident, said Senior Supt. Luisito Palmera in a report here Tuesday. The three were arrested two hours after they robbed the passengers of a Five Star Bus bound for Nueva Ecija. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Cop shoots son

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—A police officer accidentally shot his own son inside the compound of the police headquarters here last weekend. A police report said SPO4 Delfin Laguerta scolded his 17-year-old son Sean and an argument allegedly ensued inside the van they were riding in. Delfin said in his affidavit that his son took his 9mm service Beretta from the van's dashboard so he tried to take it away from him. He accidentally fired the gun, hitting his son in the face. Sean is in critical condition. PNP provincial director Michael Garraez said he immediately ordered the disarming of Laguerta, who is his provincial executive senior police officer. *Jofelle Tesorio, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

DepEd franchising

THE COMMERCIAL editions of Department of Education-approved textbooks are now available at reasonable and affordable prices through Libro bookstores, the single source of students' textbook needs. Libro bookstore is now open for franchising in all Mindanao, Visayas and Luzon provinces, cities and municipalities. Franchisees will be supported by publishers and importers with an adequate and affordable supply of textbooks, trade, scholarly, professional, religious books. For details, dial 533-3309 or visit the Libro head office on the fourth floor of the A-Z Building, 723 Sgt. Bumatay Plainview Mandaluyong.

2 killed in Cotabato

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Police are tracking down two unidentified motorcycle-riding men who gunned down in broad daylight two persons in Polomolok, South Cotabato. Police identified the victims as Abdulrajak Sablal and Marcos Rufa. Polomolok police led by Supt. Florendo Quidilla said at around 2:40 p.m. Tuesday, the two were negotiating the Dole Cannery Road leading to the national highway on board a motorcycle when two assailants on board a Yamaha DT motorcycle blocked their path, drew their guns and fired. The suspects were seen with back-ups on board a white four-wheel drive pickup. *Aquiles Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Suspected Abu leader linked to Indons' kidnap falls

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Police and Marines arrested a suspected leader of the Abu Sayyaf bandit group inside the Zamboanga City Port Authority Compound on Jan. 2.

Arrested was Merang Abante, allegedly a trusted man of Basilan-based Abu Sayyaf leader Khadaffy Janjalani.

Chief Supt. Simeon Dizon Jr., police chief for Western Mindanao, said Abante has a pending warrant of arrest issued by the Basilan court.

Dizon added that Abante has a P1-million reward for his capture dead or alive.

Lt. Col. John Martir, Marines Forces South deputy commander, said Abante was also involved in the Dos Palmas kidnapping in Puerto Princesa City in April 2001.

"He was also involved in the abduction of the three Indonesian nationals," Martir said referring to the kidnapping of Muntu Jacobus Winowatan, Jul Kipli and Pieter Lerrich in June last year off Capual Island in Luuk, Sulu.

Also on Jan. 2, suspected Abu Sayyaf member Maid Sampang alias Abu Mike was arrested in his hideout on Balukbaluk Island in Lantawan, Basilan.

He is believed to be a follower of Abu Sayyaf leader Hussin Madjirul. *Julie Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Gov urges aerial search for 3 Dutch

By Alex V. Pal
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—Negros Oriental Gov. George Arnaiz has requested the Philippine Air Force to conduct an aerial search over the provinces of Sulu and Tawi-tawi to find three missing Dutch tourists and their Filipino boatmen.

The governor also wrote to the governors of Basilan and Tawi-tawi for their help in finding Dutchmen Klaas Bisschop and brothers Jacco and Marcel Wilderom and Filipino boatmen Leoncio Capistrano and Alejandro Mamingo.

This developed after two brothers of Bisschop and two friends of the Wilderom brothers Tuesday presented Arnaiz maps of the sea current, pointing to these as one of the possible places where the missing persons could have drifted.

Brothers Roalos and Jacco Bisschop, Bart Koeman and Ineke Ten Hertog showed Arnaiz the maps made from data gathered by the US Navy when they conducted their search in February for debris of a Chinook helicopter, which crashed near Apo Island.

Arnaiz met with the Dutch representatives for more than an hour at the Capitol to discuss possible courses of action in trying to locate the missing persons.

In an interview with reporters later, Jacco Bisschop described the disappearance of the five persons as "mysterious."

If the pump boat sank or broke into pieces, he added there could have been some pieces of evidence at this time.

Asked if they thought it was possible that the tourists were kidnapped, Jacco only replied: "It's hard to say."

Arnaiz said the Dutch Embassy should make a formal request with the Philippine government to expand the area of the search.

The Dutch tourists rode a small pump boat from San Juan, Siquijor for Apo Island on Dec. 18. It was supposed to be a one-day trip but they never reached their destination.

16-yr-old boy held for blast

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—The police have taken custody of a 16-year-old boy who was tagged in the Dec. 31 bombing in Tacurong City, which killed 10 people and wounded 32 others.

The boy was one of the wounded.

Supt. Norberto Batislaong, Task Force Talakudong chief, told the INQUIRER that the boy's parents personally requested him Monday night to take custody of the boy for fear of retaliation by angry relatives of the blast victims.

Batislaong said the boy has denied involvement in the bombing. But he said the teenager's features closely resembled the sketch drawn from the description of several witnesses: Long-haired, skinny, from 5'1" to 5'5" in height.

The sketch was posted all over Tacurong three days after the carnage. The city government created the task force and offered a P100,000 reward for the capture of the bomber.

The boy's parents had brought him to one of the hospitals in Tacurong on Jan. 1 due to shrapnel wounds. *Aquiles Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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INQUIRER Southern Luzon
Editor Jun Bandayrel Bureau Chief Floreño G. Solmirano

Tabon Caves:

Past within reach

THE TABON Caves Complex at the Lipuun Point, formed by uplifted and coralline limestone, appears as a series of rounded limestone domes separated by deep chasms. Boardwalks now lead to the Tabon Cave.

DOMINIQUE MONERA-TABORA

By Dominique Monera-Tabora
Quezon, Palawan

PALAWAN is our future in terms of economy and tourism."

Tourism Secretary Richard J. Gordon expressed this optimism during the recent inauguration of newly constructed facilities in the Tabon Caves Complex in southern Palawan.

The facilities have made the site of Philippines' prehistoric past more accessible to tourists. They include a jetty, boardwalks leading to the caves, view decks in the Tabon and Manunggul caves, information signages, limestone-covered stairs, and world-class restrooms in the Tawa-Tawa station at the Lipuun Point and in the newly landscaped museum in the municipality of Quezon.

Promoted by the DOT as "A Natural and Cultural Treasure of the Philippines," the Tabon Caves Complex was extensively excavated from 1962 to 1966 by the late Dr. Robert B. Fox, an American archaeologist who recovered an astonishing cultural wealth of human and animal fossils, shells, burial jars, ornaments and tradeware ceramics under a project supervised by the National Museum.

Of Tabon's more than 200 caves and rock shelters, only 29 caves had been fully explored then.

"The extensive but still incomplete excavations in the caves have provided the first detailed cultural chronology of an area in the Philippines based on systematic excavations, a cultural chronology which embraces more than 50,000 years of Philippine prehistory," Fox wrote in a report.

He found the skullcap of a prehistoric man, carbon-dated to be 47,000 years old, inside the Tabon Cave, one of the caves in the complex.

Tabon Cave

Fox noted that the Tabon Cave was occupied from 50,000 to 9,000 years ago, which was about the period of the last glacial maximum when a land-shelf would have been exposed in front of the cave.

"About 20,000 years ago, the sea would have been about 100 meters below its present level. At that time, the sea coast would have been 30-35 kilometers distant from [the] Tabon Cave," he said.

The Tabon Caves Complex at the Lipuun Point, described by Fox as "formed by uplifted, coralline limestone which oil geologists have dated to the Middle Miocene," appears as a series of rounded limestone domes separated by deep chasms.

The sides of the domes vary from steep slopes to sheer cliffs covered with lush vegetation. The largest and highest dome is 690 feet above the present sea level.

To protect the caves and their spectacular surroundings, Lipuun and the Tabon Caves Complex were established as a "National Preservation" site under a presidential decree issued in 1972.

Island barrier

Fox noted that the "the geographical position of Palawan—forming a long island barrier between the Sulu Sea and the South China Sea—was crucial to movements of people and ideas into and from the Philippines. Palawan was a major corridor linking the Philippines with Asia, its ancient homeland."

During the Middle Pleistocene Epoch (175,800 years ago), he said, "Palawan formed a natural land bridge between Borneo and the northern Philippines and, indirectly with south mainland Asia, allowing man and animal to drift into the islands.

"The land connection between Borneo and Palawan persisted to the Upper Pleistocene (1.6 million to 10,000 years ago). Even the archaeological and ethno-historical records of Palawan also show intimate cultural ties with Sabah and Sarawak in Borneo."

Another indicator of a land bridge is the "close affinity between the flora of Palawan and Borneo," which, according to noted botanist Dr. Domingo Madulid, "is not apparent with the rest of the islands in the Philippines."

Madulid describes Palawan as "one of the most diverse and rich islands in the Philippines, with 3,000-3,500 flowering plant species, mostly known to occur only in Palawan."

The lowland forest of the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park (PPSRNP) was recognized as one of the World Wildlife Fund Global 2000 Ecoregions and noted as having the richest tree flora in Asia.

The whole province of Palawan has been designated by Unesco as the "Man and Biosphere Reserve" for representing a distinct bio-geographic region in itself. It is the largest province in the country with 1,768 islands and a land area of nearly 1.5 million hectares. Its irregular coastline indented by numerous coves, bays, mangrove forests and white sand beaches stretch almost 2,000 km long.

The islands are known for massive limestone cliffs and caves, hidden lagoons, lush forests and rich coral reefs.

Plan

The inauguration of the tourist facilities in the Tabon Caves Complex is the culmination of the Tabon Caves Detailed Tourism Development Plan put together by the DOT and the National Museum in 1998. The plan aimed to preserve the archaeological and prehistoric sites and its environmental resources while creating opportunities for economic growth.

Improvement of exhibits in the museum branch and archaeological assessment studies in the complex were also undertaken by the National Museum.

To promote the site as a major cultural tourism and archaeological destination, the DOT, with the help of the National Museum and the Philippines Convention and Visitors Corp., put together the Tabon Caves brochure, which also features the numerous islands and waterfalls in Quezon, the Rasa Island as home of the Philippine Cockatoo, and the Estrella waterfalls in Narra town.

Other attractions in Puerto Princesa City, like the PPSRNP, Crocodile Farm and Nature Park, Honda Bay islands and the Iwahig Prison and Penal Farms were also featured as part of the tourism department's efforts to promote tourism in southern Palawan.

Palawan Rep. Abraham Kahlil B. Mitra (second district) thanked Tourism Secretary Gordon and Undersecretary Evelyn Pantig for spearheading the creation of the Southern Palawan Tourism Development Plan.

Mitra has consistently lobbied for the development of tourism in that part of the island-province while the DOT was working on the Northern Palawan Sustainable Tourism Master Plan.

The "Study on Environmentally Sustainable Tourism Development Plan for Northern Palawan" conducted by the Japan International Cooperation Agency and the DOT in 1997 paved the way for the creation of the ongoing Sustainable Environment Management Project funded from a 2-billion yen loan from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation.

A day before the inauguration of the Tabon Caves facilities last Dec. 5, Pantig, who is concurrent chair of the National Commission on Culture and the Arts (NCCA), also inaugurated the Ethnographic Museum in the PPSRNP during the third anniversary of the inscription of the PPSRNP as a World Heritage Site by the Unesco.

Eco-tourism

The Ethnographic Museum and Tourist Information Center in the PPSRNP was built by the Palawan Tropical Forestry Protection Program or the PTFPP, which was jointly funded by the European Union and the Philippine government, to encourage nature-related tourism in the communities surrounding the park and reduce visitor pressure on the underground river.

In 1997, the park received around 40,000 visitors, which contributed about P153 million to the economy of Puerto Princesa.

A tourist exit survey conducted by the PTFPP from September 1997 to April 1998 revealed that 75.7 percent of the respondents cited the subterranean river as their primary reason for traveling to Puerto Princesa.

Visitor satisfaction was very high, it was noted, with 92 percent of the respondents saying they would recommend visiting the place to a friend.

According to Pantig, the thrust of DOT is eco-tourism development to provide livelihood, as well as to protect the environment and culture of the people.

She described Puerto Princesa and Palawan as the perfect destination for eco-tourism. Because of the notable achievement of the city and province as the First Hall of Fame awardees for being cleanest and greenest in their categories, Palawan deserves to be the capital of eco-tourism in the country, she added.

Plans for the cultural program in the PPSRNP by the DOT, the Philippine Tourism Authority and the NCCA include the establishment of a school for living traditions for the Tagbanua elders to pass on traditions to the younger generation; the development of other trails going to the underground river to benefit other communities; the development of bird watching, photo safaris, wildlife observation and other activities; training locals as tour guides to ensure that the environment and culture will not be destroyed; and the establishment of a Batak information center in Barangay Tanabag.

All of these eco-tourism thrusts are part of the work and financial plans of the DOT for the next four years, said Pantig, to enable the people to "earn without destroying the environment and culture."

Natives

Louella Jurilla, tourism regional director, said the ethnographic museum was a collaboration of the DOT, the National Museum, the NCCA and the city government to enhance the destination of the underground river and vary the experience of the tourists.

It showcases the culture and arts of the Batak and Tagbanua tribes, and allows visitors to interact with the material objects and appreciate the culture of the indigenous people living in the PPSRNP.

The DOT will also train locals to oversee the museum and conduct tours.

Extensive research work has been conducted by the National Museum to be able to sustain the entry of tourists and to determine measures to protect the culture of the Batak and the Tagbanua, said Artemio Barbosa, chief of the National Museum's Anthropology Division.

Chieftain Eddie Yambao of the Cabayugan Ancestral Domain Claim laments that many of the younger generation of the Tagbanua who have become educated are ashamed to speak their language.

Yamboa, however, is proud that while other places are barren, the Cabayugan Ancestral Domain Claim is still lush.

Pantig revealed that after visiting the whole country from Batanes to Tawi-Tawi, she finds the environment in the area as the greenest and most lush.

Maldives

Since Palawan represents about one-fifth of the 7,107 islands in the country, Gordon said he has received orders from President Macapagal-Arroyo to make it like Maldives.

"We can cluster the islands around a major airport here and build the highways. We build the major infrastructures and the investors can develop the islands so that they can bring in high-end tourists," he explained.

Instead of going all the way to Maldives, which is about 12 hours by plane from Japan, Japanese tourists can come to the exclusive island resorts in Palawan and spend between $500 and $1,000 a night, Gordon said.

However, the responsibility of preserving the environment would belong to the owners of the islands, much like what Ten Knots Development Corp. is actively doing in the El Nido resorts, he said.

Gordon stressed that the local government must prepare the groundwork for a culture of tourism. "We are doing it carefully, that is why we are doing it with international agencies as well in a slow-burn way so as not to destroy the environment," he added.

The construction of international airports in Puerto Princesa and Coron, as well as the concreting of main roads made possible by a grant from the World Bank, will start this month.

The Coron airport will cluster favorite tourist attractions like the Calauit Game Reserve and Wildlife Sanctuary, the Coron Reefs, Kayangan Lake (a Hall of Fame awardee as the Cleanest Inland Body of Water in the Philippines), and the nearby islands of Culion, Linapacan and El Nido.

In preparation for the establishment of international airports, the DOT is asking the Chinese, Taiwanese, Koreans and Japanese to look into the possibility of establishing charter flights straight to Palawan, without passing through Manila.

Gordon added that "the future of Palawan is very strong—you have oil, you have the lush environment, you have the beaches, you have the corals, you have history in the Tabon caves and you have the people."

He commended the efforts of Mitra, Palawan Gov. Joel T. Reyes and Puerto Princesa Mayor Edward Hagedorn to work together for the benefit of the province despite their political differences.

"Tourism is the biggest industry worldwide with 700 million tourists roaming the world," said Gordon.

He noted, however, that the Philippines only got 2.2 million—the highest—in 1997 while Thailand got 11 million tourists and earned $12 billion revenue from tourism. In contrast, the total revenue from remittances of overseas Filipino workers is only $6 to $7 billion.

The DOT is optimistic that with the declaration by the World Travel Organization of 2003 as a year for visiting the Philippines, the country will be able to generate much-needed revenues from tourism.

TABON CAVES COMPLEX

MAP of the Tabon Caves Complex.

COURTESY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Biazon rejects all offers; BF says he's got 2 posts

From page A1

pointment of Secretary Simeon Datumanong to the Department of Justice.

He had earlier expressed preference for heading not one but the two agencies.

The invitation for Biazon to join the Cabinet appeared to be part of the realignments that Malacañang is making.

And had National Security Adviser Roilo Golez accepted the offer for him to become press secretary, his post would have gone to former Executive Secretary Renato de Villa.

This was disclosed by an administration source a day after the Palace formally announced Agrarian Reform Secretary Hernani Braganza's appointment as press chief and following reports that De Villa had been offered Golez's post.

The source said Ms Macapagal sounded out Golez Monday night, when Braganza was still purportedly hesitant to accept Ignacio Bunye's then post.

Sought for comment, Golez said: "I serve at the pleasure of the President." Asked if he would remain at his post, he said he considered the National Security Council "home."

Playing musical chairs

Jovito Salonga yesterday warned President Macapagal-Arroyo against playing "musical chairs" in her Cabinet, saying this was pulling her down from the "lofty heights" she recently achieved.

Salonga, a former Senate president and stalwart of the anti-Marcos movement, said that instead of naming new officials who might be unfit for their posts, Ms Macapagal should work with the ones in her Cabinet.

"GMA has only over a year and a half left. This is no time to play the game of musical chairs," Salonga said in a statement to appear in the next issue of Kilosbayan magazine.

He said this would serve as a test for the President after her momentous declaration on Dec. 30 that she would not run in the 2004 elections.

Salonga said the public was waiting for the President to match her decision to forego her political ambition with "concrete deeds."

He said reshuffling Cabinet members was not the concrete deed that the public was expecting.

He also said that while it was correct to say that what the President announced in her Rizal Day speech was a "personal sacrifice" on her part, it should not be compared to the sacrifice of national hero Jose Rizal—as what her spin doctors immediately did.

To do so is to "cheapen the term, exaggerate what she did, and taint the purity of her motivation, Salonga said, adding:

"If GMA had already won her own six-year mandate as President and gave up her office after only two years, for the sake of achieving a noble cause, or if GMA was, by all accounts, indisputably sure of victory in 2004, 'sacrifice' would have been an appropriate word to use.

"But fidelity to facts should be more compelling."

Salonga observed that Ms Macapagal abandoned her plan to seek the presidency "at a time when her popularity rating had gone down to a near-record low of plus 6 percent net satisfaction rating" in the survey conducted by the Social Weather Stations on Nov. 15-Dec. 2.

According to the Pulse Asia and SWS surveys, Ms Macapagal would be a poor fourth if the presidential election were held during those dates, next only to former Education Secretary Raul Roco, action star Fernando Poe Jr., and Sen. Noli de Castro.

Salonga said this well publicized comparison must have "hurt the President immensely, given her unquestioning reliance on poll surveys."

Even administration Sen. Ralph Recto has observed something amiss in the continuing dance in the Cabinet.

"This is demoralizing and creating insecurity among the other Cabinet members," he told the INQUIRER.

Recto said the President should have named the new Cabinet during her Rizal Day speech.

"What is happening is she is opening up for criticism her choices for the Cabinet," he said. "[She] should just make one sweeping announcement so that the Cabinet can get its act together and immediately go to work sans the anxiety and insecurity."

Floats, etc.

Golez's case indicated the feverish activity in Malacañang's corridors.

The source in the administration said Golez was offered the press portfolio Monday night, shortly after the President's chief of staff Rigoberto Tiglao cleared a "float" to reporters that Golez was being considered for the post.

Golez told the President that he was ready to accept any job, the source said, adding that a top-level meeting was held the next day in Malacañang to determine who was getting what post.

The source said Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo and Avelino Cruz, the President's legal counsel, "objected to Golez's being moved out of the security loop."

"[Romulo and Cruz] argued that Golez has extensive security contacts both locally and internationally, and that a successor would need some time to acquire these," the source said.

After the meeting, Bunye, now Ms Macapagal's spokesperson, called for his regular press briefing and announced Braganza's appointment. But the source said Ms Macapagal first phoned Golez to say that he would stay as security adviser.

A Palace insider had earlier said the Tiglao camp attempted to derail Braganza's appointment, which Tiglao denied.

Bunye made a similar denial in an interview over state radio dzRB. But he noted: "Actually it took some time for Secretary Braganza to ... make up his mind."

De Villa, meanwhile, denied over radio dzBB that he had been offered Golez's post. He also said he was "not interested" in it.

Willing accomplice

The labor union of the Department of Agrarian Reform, which had a sour relationship with Braganza in his two-year stint, is not sold on his recommended successor, Undersecretary Efren Moncupa.

In a statement, the DAR Employees Association described Moncupa as a "willing accomplice" to Braganza's supposedly questionable management style and policies.

It said Braganza's successor should be either of the assistant secretaries, Jose Mari Ponce and Lorenzo Reyes, whom it described as having "consistently worked for the interest of farmers ... though lacking in political clout."

The union said it would also welcome "an appointee from outside the DAR" as long as he or she had proven credentials of being "pro-farmer." *With reports from Leila B. Salaverria and Volt Contreras*

House refuses to give up on Cha-cha

From page A1

tinue pushing the initiative "literally behind the backs of the people."

He added that any Charter change through a constituent assembly would in effect allow members of Congress to legislate "for themselves and for their self-interest."

That notwithstanding, the 1,495-strong League of Municipalities (LMP, composed of municipal mayors) and the 115-member League of Cities (LCP, city mayors) have sent resolutions to the House expressing support for the initiative.

A House statement said Mayors Ramon Guico Jr. and Pacifico Mayor, LMP president and secretary general, conveyed the group's support to the committee on constitutional amendments.

"Now is the time to push the initiative for constitutional change. Politics will no longer be a factor in deciding constitutional change," Guico was quoted as saying.

Earlier, the LCP sent De Venecia its resolution supporting Charter change through a constituent assembly. Mayor Francis Tolentino, LCP president, also sent the resolution to Senate President Franklin Drilon.

Natural

Abad said it was natural for the senators to resist Charter change because De Venecia had been openly proposing a unicameral legislature that would mean the abolition of the Senate.

"I think what we have to do is pass our own version and leave it to the Senate. And if there is a groundswell of support for Charter change, let this put pressure on the Senate," he said.

Abad also said the "situation" in the Senate could be altered if there were changes in the leadership. Drilon was to have yielded the Senate helm to Sen. Rene Cayetano last December, but the latter is ill and under treatment in the United States.

Teodoro, nephew and trusted lieutenant of NPC chair Eduardo Cojuangco, said he was saddened by Drilon's statement against Charter change.

He urged Drilon and other senators to "set aside their personal agenda and join [Charter change proponents] for the good of the country."

"Considering the pressing economic, political and social problems of the country today, it is now imperative to amend the Charter in order to allow the correction of certain economic provisions that would spur economic growth, increase jobs and income, and improve the productivity and competitiveness of the Philippine economy," Teodoro said in a statement.

"The longer we wait, the deeper the Philippines will slide into the pit. It will become harder to turn things around," he added. *With a report from Michael Lim Ubac*

Faith healer to fix busted Marcos bust

From page A1

The NPA Chadli Molintas Command has claimed responsibility for blasting the bust of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos at Barangay Taloy Sur here last Dec. 29.

The explosion blew away the eyes, nose and ears of the P3-million bust that Marcos had ordered built in 1980. Only part of the lips and the base of the 10-meter-high bust remain.

"A blight upon the ancestral home of (Ibaloi) people, a grim reminder of the monstrous crimes of the Marcoses, an abomination that had to be eliminated," an NPA spokesperson said of the disfigured bust.

But Labo, who served as Marcos' faith healer, disagreed. "I don't think what they (communist rebels) did was right for the country. The (bust) is already part of history," he said.

"I just came from Russia and I still saw some statues of (Joseph) Stalin around. He, too, was a dictator but they respected his statues," Labo added.

The Marcos supporter made headlines in 1997 when he was arrested in Russia for practicing faith healing.

Labo said he would discuss with Mrs. Marcos the details of his offer to rebuild the bust. "It would be a waste to leave the bust in ruins," he said.

Labo met with reporters in Baguio City on Wednesday to launch a local opposition party that would challenge Mayor Bernardo Vergara and Rep. Mauricio Domogan.

He said he would not run for Baguio mayor in 2004 but would endorse two candidates for the top elective posts in the city.

Labo, who was born in Dagupan City, claimed that the "Pangasinan vote" in Baguio would support his candidates whom he did not name. *Frank Cimatu, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Shed 'happy tears' for Patricia Borromeo

From page A1

yesterday afternoon at the De los Santos Medical Center in Quezon City.

She was 31.

The daughter of the late Dr. Ramon Borromeo, she is survived by her mother Myrna Panlilio-Borromeo; her brother RJ; sister Mitzi, sister-in-law Trina; niece Sammy and grandmother Jaina Panlilio.

Her remains were cremated last night. Her ashes are now at the Santuario de San Jose in Greenhills, San Juan. Funeral rites will be held on Sunday.

While she lived for nearly two years after she was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, Patricia became the inspiration (some said "apparition") to a host of cancer survivors.

She had tirelessly sought out the company of other cancer survivors to comfort, to encourage, to empower, to help them find the path toward the healing of mind, body and soul, to offer hope and the meaning of their pain.

One of the great beauties of her generation, she was a most-favored model of the country's leading designers. But Patricia preferred to be a full-time teacher at the pre-school named Tea House that she owned in Forbes Park.

Just like her wards in school, she remained as child-like, as full of wonder and joy to the end.

Arab leaders offer Saddam asylum

From page A1

the life of Saddam and his people."

Ople said the ambassadors, whom he declined to identify, had told him that the Iraqi leader "could be accommodated in Libya."

The Philippines has been closely monitoring the situation in the Middle East, where contingency plans have been put in place to evacuate some 1.5 million Filipino workers there if war erupts.

The United States and its allies have been building up their forces in the Gulf ahead of a Jan. 27 deadline for UN weapons inspectors to submit to the UN Security Council their first major report on Iraq's alleged weapons of mass destruction.

Iraq has denied US accusations that it was harboring weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear and possibly deadly chemical and biological agents. Baghdad has also been cooperating with UN weapons inspectors.

Even so, Britain has ordered a task force of ships and 3,000 Royal Marines to head toward the Persian Gulf and mobilized 1,500 reserve soldiers for possible war on Iraq, joining the United States in stepping up military pressure on Saddam Hussein.

The United States has threatened to use force to disarm Iraq if it does not give up weapons of mass destruction as required by UN Security Council resolutions.

Tens of thousands of US combat troops are heading for the Gulf in a mobilization that will put 200,000 American soldiers in the region by the end of February. A US battle staff has begun assembling at Camp As Sayliyah, a Qatari command post.

Contingency plans

Philippine officials believe that war in Iraq is inevitable but hope hostilities won't last more than two weeks.

Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas said the government would have to stop the deployment of Filipino workers to the Middle East in the event of a protracted war.

A special Philippine envoy arrived the other day in the Gulf to prepare for the possible evacuation of tens of thousands of Filipino workers.

Former Armed Forces Chief of Staff Roy Cimatu landed in Kuwait where US troops are massing for a possible invasion of Iraq. Cimatu is scheduled to visit Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, all oil-rich countries where foreign workers do much of the manual, domestic and office labor.

"I think the government of Kuwait has made extensive preparations for all eventualities," Cimatu said after meeting with the staff of the Philippine Embassy. "I will relate to the families back home in our country that their loved ones are safe."

Cimatu, who heads the Middle East Preparedness Team, talked with emergency and labor authorities in Kuwait and distributed emergency handbooks to leaders of the Filipino community. A team of biological and chemical warfare experts accompanying him was to demonstrate the use of gas masks.

Kuwait fears a chemical or conventional missile attack by Iraq and has ordered 2 million gas masks for its population—including foreign workers. However, the masks have not yet been distributed.

Not panicking

"The intention of the Philippine government is to show our seriousness in taking care of our nationals. It is not to show that we're panicking," said Bayani V. Mangibin, the Philippine Embassy's acting charge d'affaires.

"A lot of our nationals here are asking us to do something to contain the fears of their relatives back home," Mangibin said. "It's still safe here."

Evacuation to another country would be a last option for the estimated 55,000 Filipinos in Kuwait and 118 Filipinos in Iraq—mostly diplomatic staff and their dependents. In all, 1.4 million Filipinos live and work in the Middle East, Philippine officials have said.

US troops are building up in the Gulf as US President George W. Bush ponders whether to invade Iraq if Saddam Hussein fails to comply with UN resolutions ordering it to eliminate all weapons of mass destruction.

But Bush says no decision has been taken and he is awaiting a report from UN arms inspectors verifying Iraq's claims that it has no such weapons.

A four-stage system of alerts is in place for Filipinos to respond to various degrees of perceived threat, ranging from heightened tensions and civil unrest to full-blown war, Mangibin said.

The responses run from being careful and avoiding places where Americans can be targeted in terrorist attacks to shifting to safer areas of Kuwait or evacuating to neighboring Saudi Arabia. *With reports from Blanche Rivera, AP and AFP*

Osmeña, De Villa ...

From page A1

"common candidate" of the administration People Power Coalition (PPC)."

Reforma and Promdi are members of the administration-led PPC, which also includes Roco's Aksyon Demokratiko party, Lakas-CMD, Liberal Party and the recently revitalized Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino or Kampi.

Principled leadership

"Since 1998, Promdi, Reforma and Aksyon Demokratiko have worked together to uphold principled leadership, regional and provincial development, people empowerment, the rule of law and equal opportunity for all," De Villa and Osmeña said.

Their endorsement was contained in a handwritten statement distributed to the media.

The release of the statement appeared to have been timed on the day President Macapagal was scheduled to convene the executive committee of the Lakas-CMD. The President co-chairs the party with House Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr.

The Lakas leadership meeting was called to discuss the party's next moves following Ms Macapagal's declaration last Dec. 30 that she was not running for election in 2004.

A number of Lakas members earlier had said that the party would consider Roco as its candidate.

As expected, Malacañang made no categorical reaction to the endorsement made by De Villa and Osmeña of Roco's presidential bid.

No politics, please

"The President wants to avoid political talk now," presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said in a Palace briefing.

In an interview over dzBB, De Villa said that he and Osmeña decided to come up with an endorsement of Roco over dinner Tuesday.

"We expect that the President will choose somebody to replace her just like what President Corazon Aquino did," De Villa said in the radio interview.

He was referring to Ms Aquino's endorsement of then former Defense Secretary Fidel Ramos, who went on to win the 1992 elections.

PPC primary

"I informed her (Ms Macapagal) through Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo that we'll nominate somebody for standard-bearer of the PPC," De Villa said.

De Villa said that he and Osmeña expected the PPC to hold a primary as the selection process to determine who will lead the administration ticket in 2004.

"Lito (Osmeña) wants our coalition partners to know that Roco is our choice," De Villa said.

De Villa said that he and Osmeña were not nominating a vice presidential candidate.

"Whoever will be the presidential candidate will choose his running mate so they'll have a good teamwork," De Villa said.

De Villa said that their endorsement of Roco doesn't mean an early start of the campaign for 2004.

"We are not yet campaigning," De Villa said. "This is within the family only."

Lakas executive committee

Bukidnon Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri said his father, Bukidnon Gov. Jose Zubiri, was raising the proposal during the meeting last night called by the President.

Governor Zubiri, himself a former congressman, is Lakas chair for Region 10. Only members of the Lakas executive committee and regional chairs were asked to attend the meeting.

De Venecia Jr., the President's co-chair, was expected to raise his controversial proposal about a government of national unity where opposition and rebel leaders would be invited to join the Cabinet.

Representative Zubiri earlier said Roco could be the ruling party's candidate because of his consistent strong showing in surveys of presidential candidates preferred by the people.

The younger Zubiri said a group of congressmen was actively pushing for Roco's adoption by Lakas.

Cojuangco, too

But at least two Lakas congressmen have floated the name of businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco to be the administration candidate.

Negros Oriental Rep. Jacinto Paras and Davao City Rep. Prospero Nograles said Cojuangco would be a strong candidate Lakas could put up against the emerging opposition candidates like the "king" of Philippine movies, Fernando Poe Jr.

Paras said Cojuangco could be an ideal candidate because his "strong political will" is necessary to solve the economic and peace and order problems of the country.

"We need a strong President who can turn around the economy and deal with terrorism. Danding is the ideal combination of economic (power) and political will," Paras said.

Cojuangco also has the money to finance a campaign, he said, adding that Sen. Juan Flavier, who is being considered as a "dark horse" by party leaders, may not have the finances to mount a presidential bid.

Cojuangco's Nationalist People's Coalition is the second biggest party in the House, with 63 members. It is an influential member of the coalition put up by De Venecia.

Better than FPJ

"Better than FPJ," Nograles said of Cojuangco, who's the chair of the food and beverage giant, San Miguel Corp. He could neutralize the opposition group of ousted President Joseph Estrada, said Nograles.

A Lakas congressman said the NPC was probably "toying with the idea" of putting up Cojuangco after the President decided not to run in 2004.

A Lakas source said De Venecia was already aware of the move to advance Cojuangco as a candidate but has not commented on it.

‘Victim, suspect met in US in 2001’

From page A1

Eufrocinio Dones, had tagged the *balikbayan* as the gunman.

Rosales said Cruz's statement that he killed Viña because he just wanted to do it had prompted him to schedule a psychiatric test for Cruz, a forklift operator for the Mitsubishi Motors in Virginia, United States. He arrived here on Dec. 27.

Psychiatrists from the National Bureau of Investigation had examined the suspect, and did not find him "psychotic."

"He was normal; he knew what he was doing," Rosales said, quoting a psychiatrist. Cruz admitted to using *shabu* or methamphetamine hydrochloride during his seven-year stay in the United States, according to Rosales.

It was Cruz's third time to come home from the United States where he had been working for seven years. Cruz, 25 and married, is a resident of Barangay Tejero, General Trias, Cavite.

He was briefly presented to the media late Wednesday afternoon at the headquarters of the Police Anti-Crime and Emergency Response in Camp Crame in Quezon City.

Despite his claims of innocence, Cruz will be charged with murder as early as today, according to Rosales, citing his positive identification as gunman by witnesses and his positive testing for gunpowder burns.

Rosales said that Viña, together with two unidentified police officers, made a call on Eustacio Cruz, the suspect's father, at their home, and was introduced to the young Cruz. At the time, Viña was attending a seminar in the area.

"They ate and drank," Rosales said. But investigators have yet to establish the identities of Viña's two companions. Neither the suspect nor his father could recall the names of the two officers.

Investigators are gathering photographs of police officers for identification by the elder Cruz.

Police refused to confirm if the two officers were Senior Superintendents Michael Ray Aquino and Cesar Mancao, who fled to the United States in July 2001 after they were summoned for investigation in connection with the abduction and murder of Dacer and Corbito in November, 2000.

So far, there's no arrest warrant for Aquino and Mancao, according to police officials.

Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr., chief of the Philippine National Police, said that investigators had yet to establish the motive. "The thing to tackle here is the motive for the killing," he said.

He reiterated that the Viña killing might have something to do with the Dacer-Corbito double murder case, stressing that it happened shortly after another suspect, PO2 Tomas Sarmiento, was presented to the media on Wednesday afternoon.

Sarmiento was nabbed by agents of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group in Cebu City on Monday. He was brought to Manila yesterday.

"We are looking into these cases because there's a common denominator. Both are involved in the Dacer-Corbito case. Viña happened to be the area commander of the PAOCTF (Presidential Anti-Organized Task Force) for the Visayas. Sarmiento was also assigned in the Visayas," Ebdane said.

Viña had been tagged as the leader of the defunct PAOCTF that abducted and executed Dacer and Corbito. He had been placed on floating status since he was linked to the crime.

In May 2002, the Court of Appeals ordered the inclusion of Viña, Aquino and Mancao in the amended information for murder filed by the Department of Justice. But Aquino and Mancao fled abroad.

Viña had maintained innocence of the charges, saying these were part of an attempt by the government to discredit those associated with the Estrada administration. At least 22 people have been charged in connection with the Dacer-Corbito case.

Ebdane said that Viña's killing would affect the investigation of the Dacer-Corbito kidnap-slay case, saying "If he was really involved, then we have lost one lead (in the case)."

Asked if Viña's killing was part of the purging of suspects in the controversial case, Ebdane said: "As a policeman, I will not even speculate because we work on evidence but the angle we are looking into is that there was an arrest made in the afternoon, and then this happened in the evening."

Dacer's US-based daughter Karina said it pained her to hear that Viña had been killed.

"We might end up with no one left to prosecute," she said in Filipino in a phone interview over dzMM. "Here we go again: Another one turned up dead with nothing moving forward (in the probe)."

"Who's next?" she said, stressing the need for the investigation to "move faster, otherwise we might have no one left to prosecute." *With a report from Volt Contreras*

DOJ . . .

From page A1

home of Flaviano Satsatin, the police officer's cousin, at around 7:45 p.m. on Tuesday in Barangay Santol, Tanza, Cavite. Viña died instantly from nine gunshot wounds.

In a telephone interview, Velasco said he was not supposed to attend the party if not for the invitation of his friend Satsatin. Still, Velasco said he was expecting to see only Satsatin and Gen. Trias Mayor Dencito Campaña.

The prosecutor said he had just arrived at Satsatin's house at around 7:30 p.m. when Viña, accompanied by a bodyguard, came and sat to his right at a long table.

Viña arrived from the provincial capital where he was chief of Gov. Erineo "Ayong" Maliksi's civil security group. Velasco came from his house, a two-minute drive from the Satsatin residence.

Joining them at the table were Campaña, neighbors and local officials, whom the state prosecutor said he used to see only in monthly gatherings at the Satsatin house.

About two minutes after Viña took his seat, a man who was later identified as Cruz rose from the opposite side of the table and repeatedly fired at Viña. Velasco said he didn't see the gunman because he was then talking to the mayor who was seated to his left.

"When I heard the first shot, I didn't pay much attention because drunken men firing gunshots are commonplace in Cavite," Velasco said. "But when I heard successive shots and even saw the gunfire from the man's gun, I rushed to my car to get my gun. I thought he was after me."

Velasco said he was seated so close to Viña that he felt the gust of air created by the flying bullets.

Six empty shells and a deformed slug of a 9 mm pistol were recovered from the scene of the crime. Three other slugs were taken from Viña's body, according to Senior Supt. Roberto Rosales, Cavite police director. Also recovered from the crime scene was a Sig Sauer pistol with six bullets in its magazine.

The killing of Viña, a resident of Trece Martires City, has puzzled his boss, the governor.

In an interview over Cebu City-based radio station dyLA, Governor Maliksi admitted that he was puzzled because Cruz killed Viña without provocation.

He said Cruz, who was with his father, was not invited to the party.

Maliksi noted that Viña had told him that he had been receiving death threats lately. Viña was relieved of his post as head of the PAOCTF's Visayas command shortly after he was linked to the kidnap-slay of Dacer and his driver on Nov. 24, 2000.

The governor said he hired Viña as the province's civil security officer because he believed in the police officer's claim that he had nothing to do with the Dacer-Corbito abduction and murder.

But lately, Maliksi said Viña had told him that he and policemen who had served under Panfilo Lacson, who concurrently headed the PAOCTF and the Philippine National Police, had been receiving death threats.

Maliksi said he had advised Viña to be extra careful.

Although he was tagged as the mastermind in the Dacer-Corbito case, Viña was not among the 13 policemen charged with double murder, said Mar Panganiban of the National Bureau of Investigation Manila Special Task Force.

Panganiban said the NBI had planned to amend the information of the case and include Viña but the bureau had encountered some problems with one of its witnesses.

Viña's death stunned his former subordinates in the defunct PAOCTF. Among them was Chief Insp. Orlando Yebra, chief of the Police Anti-Crime and Emergency Response, which was formerly the PAOCTF-Visayas. Yebra was Viña's administration, finance and operations officer.

"We knew him very well. He is a great loss to the PNP organization," said Yebra, who described his former boss as "very open, approachable and (a) good leader."

He said he did not believe that Viña was involved in the Dacer-Corbito killings.

Yebra, however, refused to comment on the possibility that Viña's killing was connected to the Dacer case, saying it was better to wait for the result of the investigation.

GMA oks . . .

From page A1

here to constitutional principles.

Bunye said the council would also include members of the political opposition who support the reform program of the President in her remaining 18 months in office. *Carlito Pablo*

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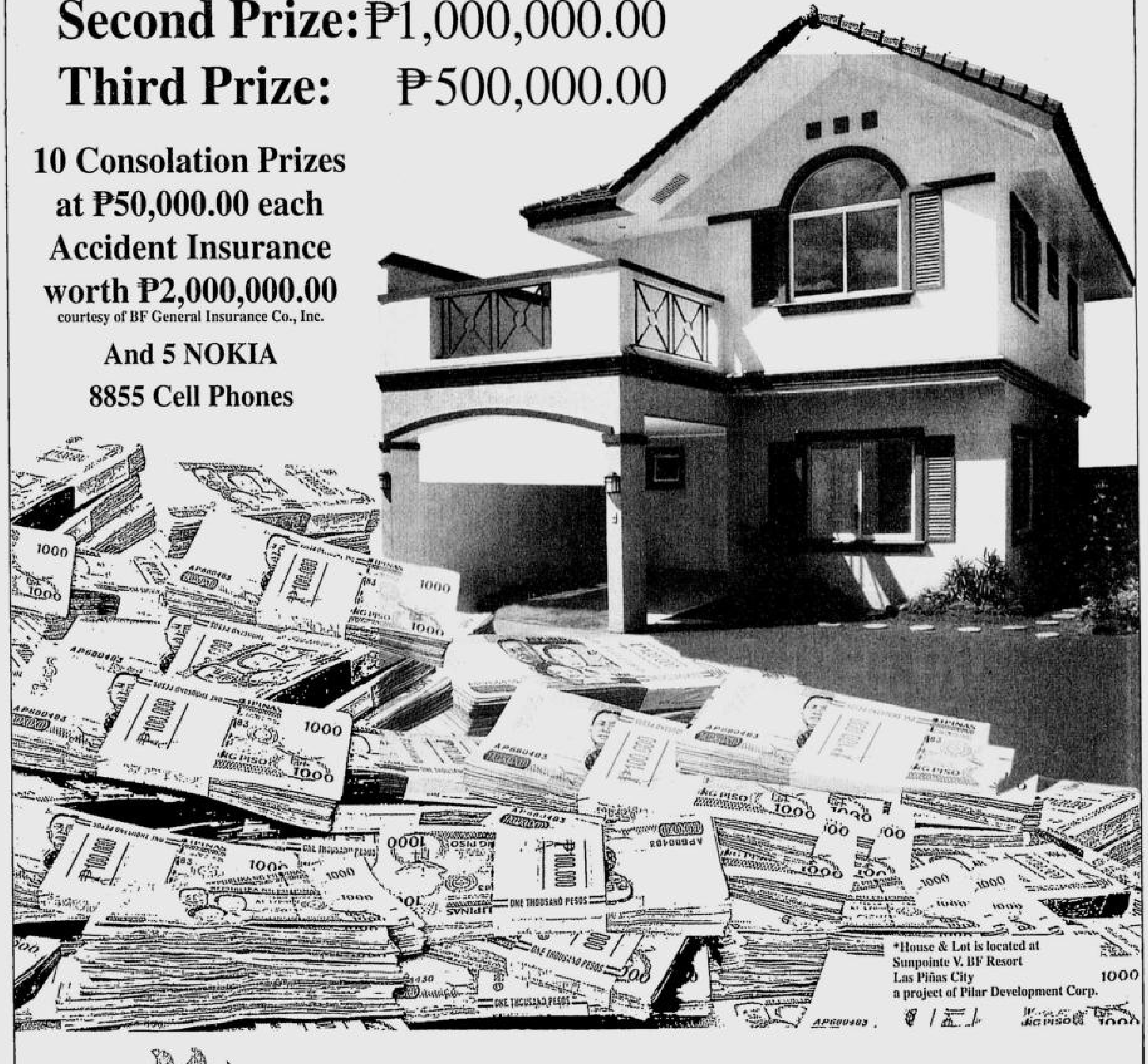

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BOXING: World Class Championship Boxing, 9 p.m., Star Sports Friday Night Fights, 10 p.m. (r), ESPN
TENNIS: ATP Tata Open, 7 a.m. (r), Star Sports

SEA GAMES GAFFE

Dayrit denounces own gen-sec

Miscommunication draws flak from Puentevella, Andrada, Feliciano, etc.

By Marc Anthony Reyes

PHILIPPINE Olympic Committee president Celso Dayrit yesterday denounced the statement made by his secretary general Romy Ribaño regarding the "shaky" status of the country's hosting of the 2005 Southeast Asian Games.

Ribaño was earlier quoted as saying the Philippines' SEAG hosting will be jeopardized after President Arroyo announced that she won't run in 2004 elections.

Dayrit said Ribaño could not be talking on behalf of the POC.

The Olympic chief said that as far as he was concerned, the preparation for the country's hosting of the SEA Games "is going on."

However, the miscommunication between Ribaño and Dayrit drew flak especially from a major block inside the POC family, which described Ribaño's statement as a "fundamental mistake and irritating."

The group, which had an emergency meeting late Tuesday night at UCC Cafe inside the Podium, is made up of weightlifting's Rep. Monico Puentevella, taekwondo's Robert Aventajado, tennis' Buddy Andrada, softball's Rep. Harry Angping and track and field's Go Teng Kok.

Also included in the core group, which claims to have the support of the majority of the 38 national sports association heads, is Capt. Reynaldo Jaylo of judo.

Rod Feliciano, president of the National Golf Association of the Philippines, described the statement as "stupid."

Said Feliciano: "If such statement was uttered by a ranking POC official (Ribaño) as reported in the papers, what a stupid statement that was. It only goes to show that they still don't know where they stand up to now. For, why must we again equate President Macapagal-Arroyo's withdrawal from the presidential race next year with the fate of our hosting the SEA Games in 2005? How many times must we remind ourselves that politics and sports do not mix? Such irresponsible statement has no place among decent men."

Puentevella, a former PSC commissioner, said Ribaño's remark is "a fundamental mistake and an insult to us members of the Philippine SEA Games organizing committee."

He added: "Everybody's bullish and things could only perk up with the President's statements. Ribaño shouldn't put the country's and POC's interest upon himself."

Aventajado, who is also the POC chair, said he will raise the issue to the POC executive council meeting this week.

Said Aventajado: "I was very irritated by the statement. They are preempting GMA's decision and who are they to do that. The SEA Games is already the commitment of the country to the SEAG organization, and who is he (Ribaño) to make such statement without consulting the executive board."

Angping noted that such issue is "beyond politics" already and should be honored because the "country's honor is at stake."

But while most of the group blamed the lapse, Andrada directed his tirade against Dayrit.

Andrada called the POC president as one who once again "displayed weak leadership."

The group promised to take up the issue in the general assembly set for Jan. 29.

DAYRIT

RIBAÑO

PUENTEVELLA

FELICIANO

Buhain heads invitees

SPORTS leaders from the government and private sector have been invited to attend the PSA 2002 Annual Awards rites honoring 102 individuals and corporate entities that emerged as best sports achievers in the year just ended.

The Awards Night will be held at the Holiday Inn Manila tomorrow starting at 7 p.m.

Philippine Sports Commission chair Eric Buhain leads government leaders which include commissioners Cynthia Carrion, Butch Ramirez, Leon Montemayor and Mike Barredo, House committee on youth and sports chair Monico Puentevella, Games and Amusements Board chair Eduardo Villanueva, Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office chair Lyvia "Honeygirl" de Leon, Philippine Amusements and Gaming Corporation chair Efraim Genuino and former PSC commissioner and GAB chair Dominador Cepeda.

Frank Elizalde, representative of the International Olympic Committee to the Philippines, and Philippine Olympic Committee president Celso Dayrit head leaders from the private sector.

Among the chief invitees are the presidents of the national sports associations under the Philippine Olympic Committee, Philippine Basketball Association chair Butch Alejo and commissioner Noli Eala, Philippine Basketball League chair Dioceldo Sy and commissioner Chino Trinidad and the managers of the various PBA and PBL ball clubs as well as presidents of sports clubs and organizations.

RACING TIPS

AT SANTA ANA BY MR. 999

Race 1--1. Zero Gravity/Sharp Drive 2. Uncle Buck 3. Lady Attila 4. Saranggani Dancer 5. Sandali Lang
Race 2--1. Audrey's Savings 2. Revolting 3. Always Florence 4. Mrs. Rainier 5. Gutmoore
Race 3--1. Heavy Metal 2. Better Harry 3. Michael's Way 4. Heza Gunner 5. Time Essential
Race 4--1. Cheese Laffongga 2. May's Magic 3. Be Ready 4. Meal Ticket 5. Hitman
Race 5--1. Maginoo's Pride 2. Everybodyhappy 3. Boogie Shoes 4. Trail Blazer
Race 6--1. Vice Free 2. Letshaveaparty 3. Jackpot Baby 4. Pride of Cebu 5. D' Greatest
Race 7--1. Pabuya 2. Pilgrim 3. Jhelen 4. Full Blast 5. D' Barrister
Race 8--1. Aba Aba Aba 2. Gigi's Gold 3. Play The Field 4. Flower Power 5. Carolina Belle
Race 9--1. Despedida 2. I Dare You 3. Something Silver 4. Ocean Magic 5. Winning Prize 6. Run Doding Fly

Singaporean clings to int'l golf lead despite 77

SINGAPORE'S Choo Tze Huang limped home with a 77 yesterday, but held on to the lead in Class A midway the 6th Samsung Philippine International Golf Championship.

Choo, 15, could only hit nine greens in regulation as he fell prey to the challenges of the par 72, 6,774-yard (from the blue tees) Wack Wack Golf and Country Club's East Course.

His effort was in stark contrast with his opening day 71 and he attributed this to poor overall game. Choo, however, will start the third round today with a six-shot lead at 148 in the division confined to players 15-17 years old.

Malaysia's Anis Helmi made a 78 to retain second place with 154, but the Philippines' Allan Miñoza claimed low medal honors with a 74 and the nephew of the country's top professional Frankie moved to third place with 156.

"I couldn't putt, I couldn't get them close around the green and on occasion, I couldn't get out of bunkers decently," Choo said. "I better play better tomorrow to gun down the overall title again."

Last year, Choo topped Class B but since he couldn't win two titles, he was awarded the overall championship. The second placer automatically captures the Class A crown.

Malaysia's Ng Choo Sian Daniel came up with a 79 to go with an earlier 80 to wrest the Class B lead with 159. The division is limited to boys who are 13-14 years old.

First round leader Hirunratanakorn Anujit of Thailand made an 84 while Singapore's Koh Dengshan shot a 78 to tie for second at 160.

An international field of 76-41 from South Korea, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand and 35 from the Philippines–is competing in the tournament sponsored by Samsung.

Son Hyeon Ho of South Korea came up with a 76 for 156 to take the solo lead in the battle for the Special Division crown.

JR Tanpinco, the defending champion from the Philippines, scored a 79 to go down to second at 159. Third was Singapore's Henry Mo after shooting a 78 for 163.

Agassi backs Aussie Open postponement

MELBOURNE—Andre Agassi threw his weight behind calls to push the Australian Open back in the year on Wednesday, saying it would enhance the quality of the season's first grand slam.

"From an ideal standpoint, everybody would be better served if it was pushed back in the year," he said at the Open warm-up event in Kooyong.

"It would give us (players) more chance to relax in what you could call the off-season and it would allow for a better build up and for better tennis at the Open.

"You get some pretty surprising results often because everybody is straight out of the blocks," the world number two added.

"But it doesn't take a genius to call the problem, it takes a genius to solve it. Many issues would have to be resolved." Former women's number one Martina Navratilova led calls for the grand slam to be put back a month to February to let the players have a longer Christmas break and avoid the hottest part of the Australian summer.

"It could take someone dying before things will change," she said in her column for The Australian newspaper.

"But I firmly believe the Australian Open should be put back a month until at least February.

"I think if they moved it a month it would be great for tennis and especially for the players."

Navratilova won the Australian Open three times but refused to play again after 1989 when it moved from the grass courts of Kooyong to the Rebound Ace at Melbourne Park even though she continued her career for another five years.

"I would have loved to have kept playing here (but) it's too hot in January," the 46-year-old said. "When you're playing a match and all you can think of is how to stay cool, trying to find any shade on court, that is no good for anybody." Agassi, renowned for his great physical shape, rejected the argument that it was too hot, however.

Top seeds prevail

SYDNEY- Top seed Marat Safin and second seeds Juan Carlos Ferrero and Kim Clijsters all cruised through to the quarter-finals of the Sydney International on Wednesday.

Safin overcame a sluggish start in stifling heat to beat Jarrko Nieminen 3-6 6-1 6-2 while Ferrero hammered Mikhail Youzhny 6-3 6-2 and Clijsters crushed Patty Schynder 6-1 6-3.

AGASSI

Registration on for Pasig race

The Pasig River Heritage Marathon—the country's answer to the world's top and most challenging marathons like the Boston, London, Berlin and Sydney Marathons–will be held on Sunday, Feb. 23.

Registration for this event that combines the physical challenges of a marathon with education and awareness about the Pasig River and its need for sustained rehabilitation is now ongoing with Unilever Philippines, Du Pont Philippines, Viva Mineral Water, San Miguel Corporation and DWIZ Radio signing up as its early supporters.

Interested athletes, running enthusiasts and running groups can now get and fill up forms available at the following venues : The PATAFA (Phil. Track and Field Association) Office at the 2nd floor of the Ninoy Aquino Stadium; the Clean and Green Foundation Inc. Office, 2nd Flr. Benlife Building, BPI Compound, Muralla St., Intramuros, Manila; The Orchidarium and Butterfly Pavillion at the Teodoro F. Valencia Circle, Rizal Park, Manila; and the Chapel of the Holy Sacrifice in U.P. Diliman.

For inquiries, call Bong Socco at 5280504 or Eloisa at 5276376.

At Dish, the spirit is willing with Spirit of '67

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

THE PHENOMENON that is the "Sixties Revival" continues to sweep the nation. The Spirit of '67 (not my high school batch which I head--for life, that is) triggered this when it hit the scene some years back. In their repertoire are songs glorifying the hits of the Sixties; their act instantly caught the imagination of the public the first time they appeared (or reappeared?).

I first saw the band perform at the National Sports Grille, the popular haunt among sports buffs and yuppies located near Greenbelt Makati and owned by my tocayo, the amiable Alfonso "Zamy" Zamora.

My gratitude to Iggy Clavecilla and Andy Dumlao, my golf buddies, for introducing the band to me. The experience rekindled memories of my hippie-packed youth that was heavily laced with Beatlemania.

I was awed by the band's wealth of knowledge of the Sixties. Turned out they were already doing it in the said era; they were merely reprising their act of nearly 40 years ago.

I saw the band perform a second time the other night at Dish, the popular restaurant at Rockwell in Makati. Boy, the crowd went wild just barely 15 minutes into the band's act. Well-manicured ladies, expensive jewelry dangling in their ears, gleaming from their necks and fingers, did non-stop dancing to the beat of Sixties songs popularized by The Beatles, Kinks, Buckinghams, Spiral Staircase, Dave Clark Five, Roy Orbison, Rolling Stones, The Turtles, The Searchers and many more. I was told Dish packs unbelievable audiences with consistency each time the Spirit of '67 does its thing.

"In fact, you need at least two weeks to reserve your table when the band performs there," said our Leah Salterio, who writes the popular "Showbiz Tidbits" in this paper.

The ladies mostly did the dancing. They would stand from their tables, face the band, shake their hips and fling their arms in wild abandon while reliving "the flower people" days of the Sixties. What a sight. The discotheque, carefree days of another era quickly ricochet in the mind.

Who says ballroom dancing has displaced the maskipops?

At Dish every Tuesday, everybody dances non-stop--partner or no partner.

At Dish when the Spirit of '67 performs, you are transported back to that era when cell fones and texting are as Greek as fast food and pizza. It's the best thing since popcorn.

Hey, Mr. Johnny Velasquez, what have you done? I thought we could only play golf?

Here's to the Sixties.

Milo volleyball clinic moved

RESPONDING to numerous requests, Milo BEST Center 9th women's volleyball league was postponed a week later than the original date and will now unwrap on Jan. 19, according to many-time national coach and tournament commissioner Florentino "Kidd" Santos.

Eighteen teams have so far joined the tourney. But other schools have signified their intention to compete once they complete their eligibility requirements. Final date of registration is on Jan. 13.

Defending champions JASMS (elementary) and St. Theresa's College (high school) lead the early entries.

The other early birds are Elementary-Assumption College, Baesa Adventist, Flos Carmeli Institution, Holy Trinity Academy, JASMS, Jubilee Christian Academy, Rosehill, School of St. Anthony, Holy Spirit and St. Scholastica's College.

Interested teams may visit or call the BEST Center at 34 Scout Lozano, QC, tel. nos. 411-6260 and 372-3065 for more details.

Miriam College and St. Scholastica's College finished second in the elementary and high school divisions, respectively, last year.

The sportsmanship awards went to Baesa Adventist (elementary) and Philippine Science (high school).

Named most valuable players were JASMS' Linda Rae Asuncion (elementary) and Angelica Clarisse Perez (high school).

Yao faces McGrady on Solar Sports

NBA rookie sensation Yao Ming and the hot Houston Rockets take on the Orlando Magic of Tracy McGrady and Grant Hill at 7:30 p.m. today on IBC-13.

In the first of the day's NBA double-header from Solar Entertainment, the Memphis Grizzlies face the Los Angeles Clippers at 11:30 a.m. on Solar Sports, with a replay at 10 p.m.

The 7-foot-6 Yao, who has been fondly nicknamed "Dynasty" (short for "Ming Dynasty") by teammates Steve Francis and Cuttino Mobley, ranks number one among fans' votes for the NBA All-Star Game in February, ahead of such luminaries as Shaquille O'Neal, Vince Carter and Michael Jordan.

The 21-year-old Yao has created a stir among American NBA fans with his deft footwork and a feathery shooting touch that is uncommon among seven-footers.

Meanwhile, on the daily Solar Sports show "NBA's Greatest Games" at 9:30 a.m., the young Charlotte Hornets battle the fabled Boston Celtics in a 1993 NBA Playoffs game regarded by many as the career-defining moment for Alonzo Mourning.

PBL CHALLENGE CUP

ICTSI battles Cheese Balls

GAMES TODAY *(Makati Coliseum)*
3 p.m.—ICTSI vs CheeseBalls-Shark
5 p.m.—Montaña vs John O

STANDINGS	**W**	**L**
Group A		
Welcoat	9	1
Blu	7	4
Dazz	6	4
LBC Batangas	5	6
Group B		
ICTSI	6	4
Montaña	6	5
John O	4	7
CheeseBalls-Shark	3	8
Sunkist	2	9

ICTSI targets the wild card berth when it meets Cheese Balls-Shark anew at 5 p.m. today in the PBL Challenge Cup at the Makati Coliseum.

The ICTSI Archers downed the Cheese Balls, 77-74, last Nov. 16 and a repeat would push them beyond reach of the Montaña Jewelers in their race for the Group B top spot that carries with it a playoff for the last semifinals berth.

Even if they lose, however, the Archers, owing to their 6-win, 4-loss card, still have two chances to forge the knockout showdown with the LBC-Batangas Blades, the last placed team in Group A.

First, if Montaña (6-5) yields to John O in the 5 p.m. encounter.

And second," if the Archers beat the Sunkist-Pampanga Juicers on Saturday.

If ICTSI and Montana wind up tied at 7-5, the Archers would still advance because they have beaten the Jewelers twice.

"If we hurdle our last two outings, that should make up for our past lapses. We have to make sure other complications are eliminated so we can focus on that playoff against LBC-Batangas and get ourselves into the crossover semifinals," said ICTSI coach Franz Pumaren.

Pumaren hopes Bernzon Franco, Dominic Uy and PBA Draft hopefuls Adonis Sta. Maria, Bruce Dacia and Rob Johnson to deliver against unpredictable Cheese Balls-Shark.

Though out of contention at 3-8, the Cheese Balls showed their mettle with an 85-65 rout of John O on Monday night.

"We get along very well in the team and although we are out, we will keep on playing hard. This is our last game and the boys want a graceful exit," said Cheese Balls-Shark coach Philip Cezar.

Roy Luarca

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NCA 7-cock derby resumes

WELL-BALANCED fights mark the resumption of the NCA 7-Cock Derby on Jan. 13-15 at the Araneta Coliseum, featuring the elite of Philippine cockfighting.

It will be hosted by the famous Firefly Group and cocker-breeders Chito Bersamin, Rudy Albano, Rocky Molintas, Eugene Martin, Jun Velasco, Danny Mendoza, Tony Lasala, Edgar Santos and Ruel Ricafort.

"The fans will surely get their money's worth with the participation of world-class entries," said an official of the National Cockers Association.

Competing are Big Dome owner Jorge "Nene" Araneta of Thunderbird fame, Danding Cojuangco (Bumble Bee), James Chiongbian (King Cobra and Saranggani), Peping Cojuangco and Esting Teopaco (Cat Stingers), Gov. Ito Ynares (Binangonan), the Firefly Group, Pampanga's Jingco and Madlambayan brothers, Eddie Araneta of Liza Galore Farms, Alex and Gerry Escalona, upcoming Louie Cua, Rudy Albano, Frank Berin of Mulawin fame, Claude Bautista and Boyboy Roa, Mario Villamor and noted breeder Boy Jiao, Dickie Lim, William Co, Gerry Ramos, John Capinpin, Edgar Santos and Ruel Ricafort.

Also taking part are Visayan and Mindanao champions such as Negros Occidental's Johnny Jalandoni, Boy Velez, Eddie Boy Ledesma and Boy Nilo Lizares, Alex Tan of Cebu, and Mindanao's Boy Primallion and Arthur and Bebot Uy.

Southern Tagalog will be led by Tony Lasala, Danny Mendoza and Romy Panganiban, while Northern Luzon will bank on Chito Bersamin, Eugene Martin and Rocky Molintas. Central Luzon's Patrick Puno, Jet Fernando, Jessie Viceo, Alan Tan and Tony Marfori complete the stellar cast of renowned cockfighters.

Mandaluyong hosts cockfights

THE "UCAP International 9-Cock Derby" semifinal round gets underway at 4 p.m. today at Mandaluyong Coliseum, featuring electrifying fights from start to finish.

Sponsors are Sagupaan Hammer, Sagupaan Complexor 3000, Sagupaan Mite Free Shampoo, Pagcor, Heritage Hotel and Washout Shampoo.

From a field of 60 powerhouse entries, 13 were unbeaten in their 2-cock assignments Tuesday night. Today's derby program has more than 70 fights.

The frontrunners are Jimmy Cody of Alabama in partnership with Butch Macasaet (RQP-RFP Greenwood Balbina Cody), 2000 UCAP Cocker of the Year Jet Fernando (JSF GP 1), *sabong* idol Patrick Antonio (Sagupaan Hammer), Bobby del Rosario (Mangzee Purple Haze (RMR I), Romero Yu (JPC MW Ray Showdown), Emil Chua (Concrete Breaker), Pol Estrellado (Sagupaan Hammer I), Ucap prexy Raymond Velayo and Rep. Ompong Plaza (Agsur Arnis Master), Wacky Salud (Mactan Casino Apr. 11) and Jun Marasigan (JM Sa Pasay Jan. 31).

Interested parties may contact 531-4003, 531-4005, 535-2341 and 534-4110.

Chinoy bowling gets going

THE CHINOY Youth Bowling Club will hold the 1st CYBC Bowling Benefit Games on Jan. 25 at the Playdium Bowling Center, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Young bowlers aged 25 years old and below are invited to play in this unique tournament, where the proceeds go to charitable organizations.

During registration, the participant must choose one charitable organization where he or she will play for. When a bowler wins or places second, the charity chosen will receive the tournament proceeds.

Beneficiaries to choose from are Tahanan ni Maria, Unang Hakbang Foundation, Alay Pag asa Foundation, Jesuit Volunteers Philippines and Xavier de Kibangay High School, Bukidnon.

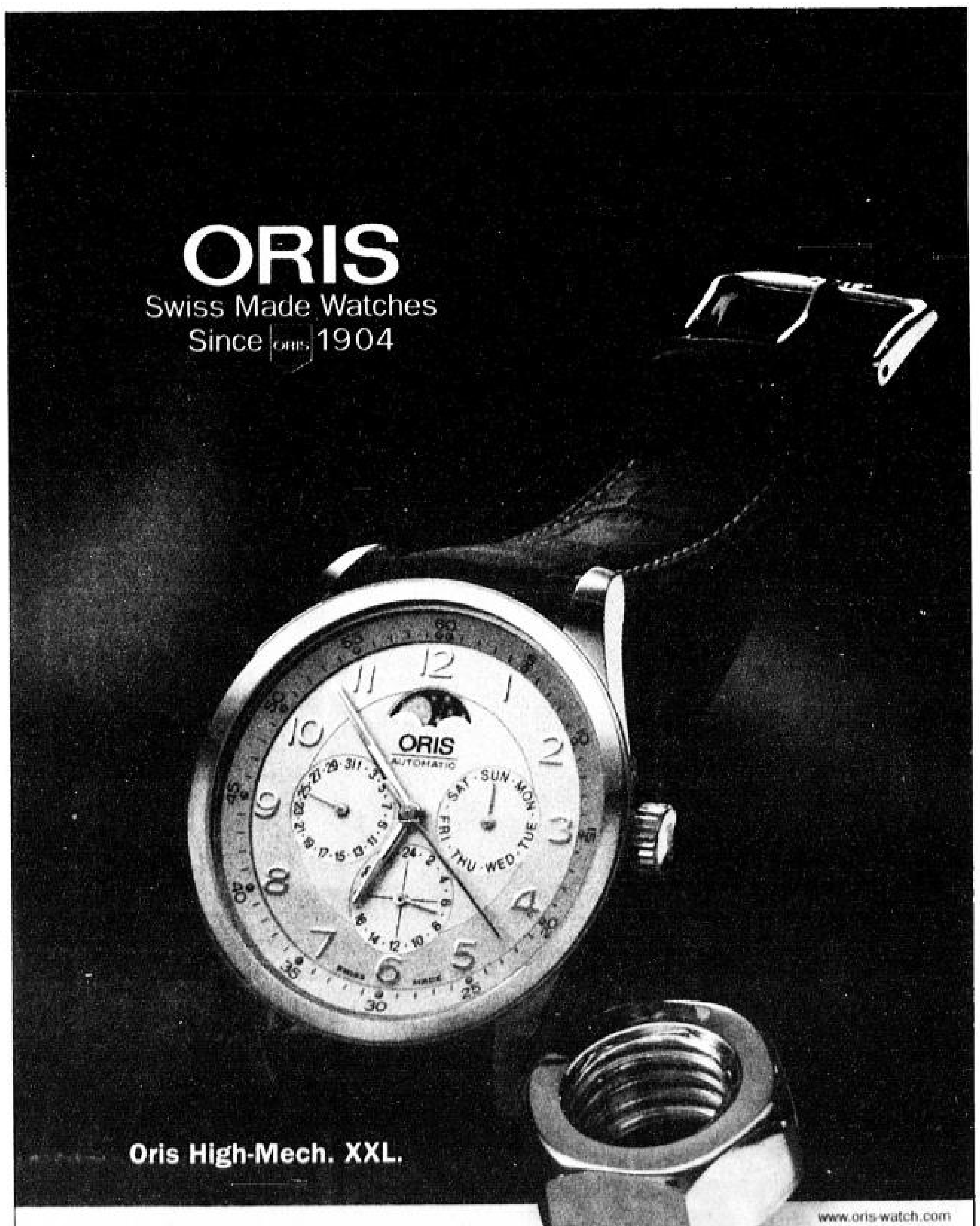
Medals, trophies, gift certificates and cash prizes await the top five bowlers of the tournament sponsored by BMG Records Pilipinas. Minor sponsors are the Getaway Spa and Magnum Suria Signs Inc.

Tournament fee is P800. The CYBC is a non profit club that aims to help the less fortunate through the sport of bowling. It was started last year by Sharwin Tee, bowling coach of the Xavier Bowling Team. The CYBC held a singles league last year and was able to raise a small amount which was later given to deserving but underprivileged students in Bukidnon. With this tournament, the CYBC hopes to raise over P10,000 for the different charities.

For details, contact Aimee at 0917-8338370.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

TODAY in 1990, Robby Luna notched 2,700 points to bag the "Karter of the Year" award in the Philippine International Karting Association (Pika) national championship. Also today in 1991, Enrique Paciencia scored 8.5 points to snare the Far Eastern Bank Region 8 chess tournament at the UP Student Center in Tacloban City.



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Bryant sinks NBA record 12 triples as Lakers win

LOS ANGELES—Kobe Bryant made an NBA-record 12 shots from 3-point range—including nine in succession—in scoring 45 points for the Lakers' 119-98 win over Seattle.

Bryant, who had never made more than five 3-pointers in a game, broke Dennis Scott's previous record of 11 with 6:58 left to play. Bryant, who shot 12-of-18 from beyond the arc and 16-of-28 overall, made 11 3-point shots in the second and third quarters. His nine straight 3-pointers also set an NBA single-game record.

Bryant received a standing ovation from the Staples Center crowd when he left the game for good with 4:16 left to play and the Lakers leading, 110-88.

Shaquille O'Neal added 20 points and a season-high seven assists for the Lakers, who have won four of their last five games. Desmond Mason led the Sonics with 19 points and nine rebounds. Vladimir Radmanovic added 18 points and eight rebounds for Seattle, which has lost six of its last eight games.

Kings 101, Bucks 76

Chris Webber had 18 points, 13 rebounds and six assists after missing the last two games with a bruised knee, and Mike Bibby added 20 points as the Sacramento Kings beat the Milwaukee Bucks 101-76 Tuesday.

Ray Allen, playing on two sore ankles, led Milwaukee with 16 points and Tim Thomas added 13. But it wasn't enough as the Bucks, playing without pointguard Sam Cassell, finished with their lowest point total this season. The previous low was 78 on Dec. 3 at Washington.

COMPLETE RESULTS

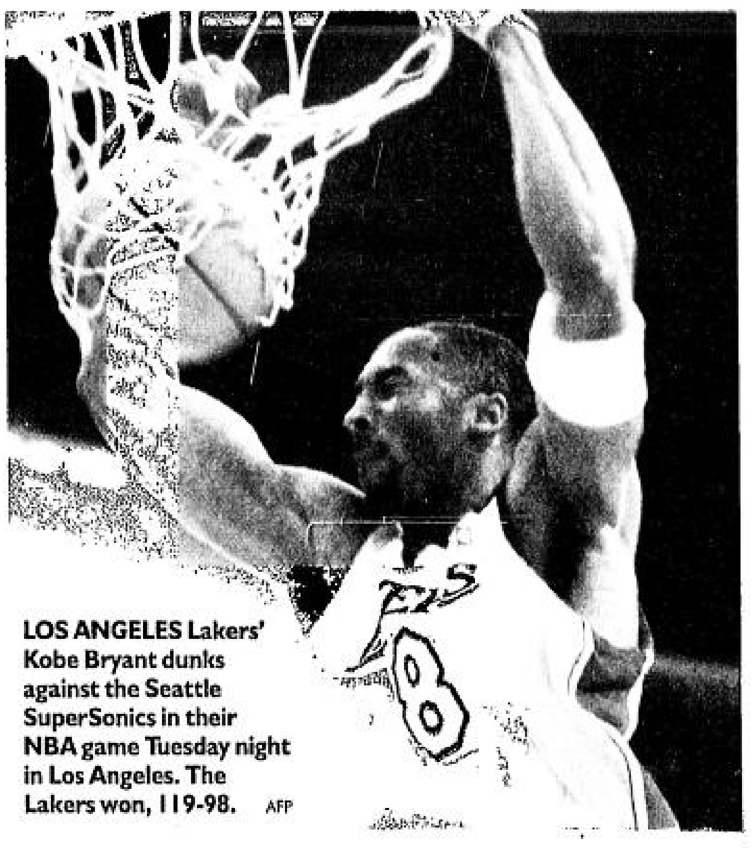
Sacramento 101, Milwaukee 76; Houston 94, Minnesota 86; Phoenix 88, Portland 81; LA Lakers 119, Seattle 98. *AP*

Yao to star in video game

SAN MATEO, California — Houston Rockets center Yao Ming has signed a two-year deal with Sorrent Inc. to develop a wireless basketball game.

"Wireless phones and wireless entertainment are very popular in China," the Chinese star said in a company announcement released Tuesday. "I've always loved video games."

The game, Yao Ming Basketball, will be fast-paced with three-dimensional animation and two-on-two action. It will be available in China this year. *AP*



LOS ANGELES Lakers' Kobe Bryant dunks against the Seattle SuperSonics in their NBA game Tuesday night in Los Angeles. The Lakers won, 119-98. AFP

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TOYOTA

Mathay son-in-law survives ambush

PANDI, Bulacan—A son-in-law of former Quezon City Mayor Ismael Mathay was wounded after he and two other companions were ambushed by three men in Barangay Siling Bata here Wednesday morning. Antonio Jaramillo, 52, suffered four bullet wounds and was taken to the Mendoza Hospital in Sta. Maria town. He came from his house in Quezon City and was driving his white Mitsubishi Pajero at about 9:40 a.m. in Sitio Lawang Bato here when three men fired at his van. His companions escaped unhurt. *Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

METRO
E-mail: pr_metro@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Louie C. Camino

Crimes soared by 47%

WPD chief claims 98% solution

By Jerome Aning

THE CRIME rate in Manila grew by almost 50 percent in the third and fourth quarter of the last year, police bared.

That's the bad news.

What's good, said Western Police District director Chief Supt. Pedro Bulaong, is that the 47% growth of crime in Manila was offset by a 98.84 percent crime solution efficiency.

Bulaong, in his address to the City Council on Tuesday, said the district's pro-active measures "won the trust and confidence of the community and as such, more crimes were reported."

The WPD's CSE, he said, is the highest among Metro Manila's five police districts for the second semester.

He added that the crime volume is also the second lowest in Metro Manila for the same period.

The police general also claimed there was the absence of kidnap for ransom cases and armored car and bank robberies in the city last year.

He pointed out that there were no terrorist attacks in the capital. The WPD, he said, arrested the main suspect in the bombing of a bus in Balintawak, Quezon City, and four other suspects carrying explosives at the North Harbor.

Bulaong added that Manila also had the lowest number of car theft incidents in the metropolis. Of the 213 car thefts reported, 119 were recovered.

The city police arrested 3,503 suspects in drug-related cases, 2,549 illegal gambling suspects, 168 people for illegal possession of firearms, and 751 cell phone snatchers and thieves.

"These are the gains we have made through the strict and vigorous implementation of my program of action dubbed as PIT campaign," he said.

The acronym stands for Patrol, Investigation and Traffic Control and Order Management. Bulaong launched the program when he took over as WPD chief last July.

THE crime rate in Manila may have soared by nearly 50 per cent but don't take that to mean that these uniformed cops are sleeping on the job. Far from that. They have actually agreed to lie down and bleed a little during yesterday's Blood Letting Activity at the Camp Crame.

DENNIS SABANGAN

Eight Manila cops accused of robbery

By Philip Tubeza

EIGHT Manila policemen are in hot water after they allegedly broke into a businessman's house in Manila and robbed him of nearly P90,000.

Trader Ricky G. Aquino, 34, of 1339 Antipolo St., Sampaloc, Manila told investigators that he and laborer Melmar Arandia were robbed on Tuesday afternoon, a report at the Western Police District-homicide section said.

The suspects were identified as Insp. Cesar Teneros, SPO2 Juan Rodriguez, SPO2 Paez, PO2 A. Manlapaz, PO2 R. Salandaran, PO2 Manuel, and three other lawmen from the Manila City-Hall Special Operations Group.

The suspects allegedly barged into Aquino's house between 3 p.m. and 4 p.m. on Tuesday and divested the complainants of their belongings at gunpoint.

They allegedly took P26,000 in cash, P11,264 worth of rings, a P2,000 watch, four necklaces worth P31,000, three bracelets worth P17,000, and another set of five rings worth P1,500.

The policemen claimed that they had an operation on Tuesday afternoon. They told investigators that they were forced to enter Aquino's home because they were going after a criminal.

They allegedly saw the culprit flee into Aquino's house. They reasoned that they could not have been out to rob Aquino because some of them were even in uniform.

But Aquino said the lawmen did rob him and Arandia and that he would pursue charges of robbery, violation of domicile, and grave threats against the policemen.

Investigators said the two parties will have a confrontation at the WPD headquarters later this week.

Cops shoot it out; holdup man killed

By Alcuin Papa

A MISENCOUNTER between policemen from the Central Police District and Camp Crame the other day in Quezon City led to the death of a suspected holdup man. One cop was seriously injured.

Wounded was PO2 Basilio Buce, of the CPD's Theft and Robbery Section, who was hit by bullets on his right arm and the back of his neck.

The suspected holdup man, between 20 to 25 years old and 5'4" in height, was killed in the firefight between the two groups.

CPD police took into custody three policemen involved in the misencounter. They were identified as SPO3 Ronnie Trinidad, SPO3 Tomas Tribor and PO3 Fernando Bundang, all assigned to the Police Security Protection Office based in Camp Crame. Two of their colleagues, identified as SPO1 Manolito Atanacio and PO3 Gil Flores, remain at large.

Reports from the CPD Criminal Investigation Unit said the firefight occurred at around 6:50 p.m. the other day along Edsa near the corner of Bansalangin Street near Veterans Village, Project 7, Quezon City.

A team from the CPD's Theft and Robbery Section composed of Buce, SPO4 Jess Casim and SPO2 Tito Girapo were conducting an operation in the area against suspected holdup men.

Buce managed to corner one of the suspects. But as Buce's team proceeded to the Progressive Poultry store in the area to phone for back-up, Trinidad and his colleagues came out of the establishment armed with long and short firearms.

Suddenly, the Crame policemen fired on Buce's team, resulting in the death of the unidentified holdup man and injuries to Buce.

Witnesses told CPD investigators that, after Buce fell bloodied, Trinidad divested the policeman of his firearm and wallet.

Responding policemen from other CPD units arrived and took the three Crame policemen into custody.

Buce was rushed to the Sioson General Hospital for treatment while the unidentified suspect was taken to the Quezon City General Hospital where he was pronounced dead on arrival due to a gunshot wound in the abdomen.

CPD Director Senior Supt. Napoleon Castro has ordered an investigation into the incident to determine the appropriate criminal and administrative charges to be filed against any member of the two groups of policemen.

TV sex act lands boy in jail

A 15-YEAR-OLD boy who was caught trying to rape a 9-year-old girl had a cute excuse: he claimed he only mimicked the scenes he saw on television.

Police however refused to believe he was just play-acting. He was locked up in jail in Caloocan City on Tuesday night.

The suspect, of Barangay 79, Zone 7, District 1, Caloocan, was still trembling when he was made to face his accusers, including the young victim, a Grade 3 pupil at a public school in the city.

Officer-on-case PO2 Nicah Bello of the Caloocan Police Children's and Women's Desk, said the incident happened at about 10:15 p.m. on a dimly lit vacant lot near the victim's house on Gen. Pio Valenzuela Street, Samson Road, Caloocan.

Belo said the victim was playing in front of her house when the teenage suspect, who was reeking with liquor, approached her and started touching her private parts. Unsatisfied, the suspect dragged the girl to a dark vacant lot, stripped off her clothes and tried to rape her. Luckily, the girl was brave enough to scream for help, which caught the attention of patrolling barangay *tanods*. The suspect was quickly collared. Asked why he did such a thing at such a tender age, the suspect said he just tried to imitate what he keeps seeing on television.

Tina Santos

Viva Nazareno!

POLICE have advised motorists to avoid the Quiapo area which celebrates today the Feast of the Black Nazarene.

Around 600 policemen, half of them in civilian clothes, will be deployed today in and around the Minor Basilica of Quiapo.

The procession, set at 2 p.m., will start from Plaza Miranda, to Villalobos Street, C. Palanca, P. Gomez, P. Paterno, Quezon Boulevard, C. Palanca, Globo de Oro, Gunao, Arlegui, Fraternal, Vergara, Duque de Alba, Castillejos, Farnecio, then right again to Arlegui, Concepcion Aguila, Carcer, R. Hidalgo, Bilibid Viejo, G. Puyat, Mendoza, R. Hidalgo, Barbosa, back to Globo de Oro, C. Palanca, Villalobos, and then to Plaza Miranda. *Philip Tubeza*

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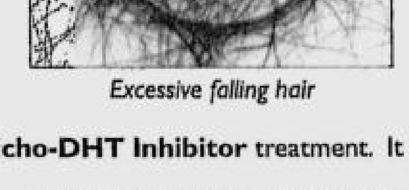
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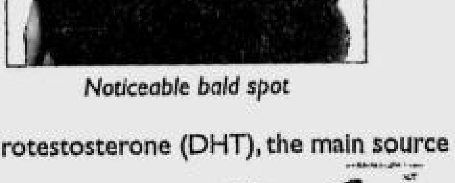
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At last, Bibit is under investigation

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

AT LAST, after so many items in this space about the irregularities committed by Cebu Customs Collector Billy Bibit, the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission (PAGC) is looking into the reports!

It took no less than President Macapagal-Arroyo for the investigation to get underway. She ordered the PAGC to conduct the probe.

Why did it have to take the President for a minor functionary like Bibit to be investigated? Is he such a sacred cow?

* * *

Commissioner Cesar D. Buenaflor, one of the commissioners at the PGAC, paid a visit to my office Tuesday morning to ask for leads.

I handed him a sheaf of documents showing that rice cargo from Thailand landing at the Cebu are misdeclared as items which have very low tariffs. Some part of the papers are copies of fake import entries given this writer by insiders at the Cebu customs port.

Buenaflor kept shaking his head sideways as he went over the documents.

* * *

I now ask my Deep Throats at the Cebu customs port to send me more copies of fake import entries so I can provide more evidence to the PAGC.

One of my sources said they couldn't trust their big boss, Customs Commissioner Antonio Bernardo, with the documents.

"*Wa man na siyay itlog, bay. Hadlok kaayo kang* Bibit, (He has no balls. He's scared stiff of Bibit)" the spy said of Bernardo when I talked to him over the cellular phone.

"*Basig isumbong pa mi ni* Commissioner kang Bibit (The commissioner might tell on us to Bibit)," he added.

* * *

The Ombudsman's office in the Visayas is useless as far as looking into Bibit's reported irregularities is concerned.

That office has been provided with the same copies of documents furnished this writer. But investigators at the Ombudsman-Visayas have not conducted an investigation. Perhaps, for tens of thousands of reasons.

I'm surprised at the silence of the Cebu media people who used to be the most vocal and fearless journalists in the country. Even during the dark days of martial law, the Cebu media were lambasting abusive and corrupt government officials while their counterparts in Metro Manila were cowed. Ah, probably the courageous media people in Cebu during martial law are gone now, replaced by a new but timid breed.

Baka naman nalagyan na kayo diyan, bay?

* * *

My customs insiders said that aside from Bibit the other officials and individuals who should be investigated for the massive smuggling of rice and cars at the Cebu port are the following:

Collector Wilfredo Inocando, Cebu deputy collector for operations; Ibrahim Pangkayon, port operations division chief; Angel Go, assistant chief, wharfinger, Cebu International Port (CIP); Emmanuel Carollo, customs broker; Joven Abuda, customs representative, E.R. Carollo Customs Brokerage Services, Room 208, Mandaue Supermart Bldg., Highway Maguikay, Mandaue City; Alex Martilino, CY supervisor, Oriental Port and Allied Services, Corp., CIP Complex, Reclamation Area, Cebu City.

Felix O. Espino, OIC, CIP; Dino Jose S. Asuncion, team leader, CIP; Dionisio B. Edera, asst.team leader, CIP; Nurhussin N. Sajili, member, CIP; Ronnie Antonio E. Ylaya, member, CIP; Ferdinand Laraga, member, CIP. All are members of the Customs Intelligence and Investigation Service (CIIS) at the Cebu port. But all of them were later driven out by Bibit from the Cebu port because they allegedly had a misunderstanding with Bibit on the sharing of the bribe money;

Capt. Isidro Estrera, district commander, customs police; Ray Lacusta, member, customs police; Dannyh Dalucapas, member, customs police; Rico Tamayo, customs police. All were assigned at the Cebu port but also allegedly driven out by Bibit for the same reason—sharing of bribe money; Rene O. Ledesma, junior vice president, ship agent, Evergreen Philippines, Cebu City; Benjamin Mordeno, chief wharfinger, CIP.

* * *

The persons mentioned above, according to my sources, allegedly conspired with one another in allowing smuggled cargo out of the Cebu International Port by using fake import entries on luxury cars and rice from Thailand.

Several firms were also named by my sources as consignees of smuggled cargoes: Mark Davies International Corp.; Tri-M Marketing International; Emperor Trading International; GTR Trading; Goldmine Trading; RM Trading Enterprises.

* * *

If the PAGC wants an unhampered investigation, it should send probers to the Cebu International Port.

But it will have to recommend to the President—since Commissioner Bernardo is scared of Bibit-the relief of Bibit as Cebu customs collector for investigators to have an unhampered probe.

The reason customs people are afraid of Bibit is that he projects an image of being a ruthless man. He used to have 40 armed bodyguards, but the number has dwindled to 20. "Bibit does not give his bodyguards a fair share of the loot so many of them have left," said my spy.

* * *

Even during martial law, I didn't find a government official, whether in the military or civil service, who inspired as much fear as Bibit does from other people.

His reputation as a ruthless man is such that, so I heard, people tremble in his presence.

I wonder why the Philippine National Police (PNP) does not check whether Bibit's bodyguards have licenses or permits for the guns they carry inside the Cebu customs zone and in the city.

But I think I know the answer: he is a graduate of the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) and most of the PNP brass in Cebu are fellow alumni.

NBI bags gold mine of shabu contacts

By Philip Tubeza

AFTER bringing down the shabu laboratory and storehouse of suspected drug lord Wang Yashi, the National Bureau of Investigation has uncovered a gold mine of drug contacts linked to Wang's syndicate in the country, NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco said yesterday.

Wycoco said NBI agents obtained the contacts, most of whom are said to be Chinese nationals, from drug suspect James Chua, allegedly one of Wang's accomplices.

Wycoco yesterday presented to the media Chua, a native of mainland China, and resident of Alvarez Street, Sta. Cruz, Manila.

"We had a rich harvest and now we have the names of their contact persons in Metro Manila," Wycoco said of Chua's arrest. "We are now finding out what are their present activities."

He said the NBI has the records showing that Wang spoke to these persons often.

While he declined to give the exact number of contacts, Wycoco said they were "many," and they constituted the syndicate's "first layer and second layer" of contacts.

So far, no one among them have turned out to be government officials, Wycoco said.

He said Chua was arrested Thursday after the NBI got a tip from the Panacea Products Inc., an international cargo forwarder, that it had a shipment addressed to Wang.

Lawmen later found out that the cargo contained nine bottles of Thionyl Chloride, an essential chemical used in the manufacture of shabu, a plastic drier/mixer, a chemical pump, a roll of yellow plastic hose, four boxes of King's Tea, and 10 boxes of assorted canned beverage.

On Dec. 28, Chua called Panacea and insisted that the cargo be delivered to him.

Wang had fled the country after a fire broke out at the drug syndicate's Valenzuela laboratory on Dec. 9.

The laboratory yielded billions of pesos worth of shabu.

On Jan. 6, Chua again called up Panacea while NBI agents were at the delivery firm's office.

Chua told Panacea employees that he had to take the cargo because it would soon spoil. He said Wang was abroad and his secretary, a certain Conchita, was on vacation.

Chua initially agreed to pick up the cargo, but he later demanded that the shipment be delivered to his home.

NBI and Philippine Drug Enforcement Authority agents pounced on Chua when he received the delivery.

Wycoco said Chua was charged before the Manila Prosecutor's Office for violating the Comprehensive Drug Act of 2002.

DENNIS SABANGAN

NONSENSE STREET

This is not a simple picture of a street excavation. This heap of crushed concrete, result of senseless digging, clogged one side of a very busy road at the corner of Boni Ave. and P. Cruz St. in Mandaluyong City. The scraped-off portion used to be passable but exasperated commuters continue to wonder why it had been dug up shortly before Christmas only to be left unattended and unpassable ever since.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, January 9, 2003
After Epiphany

1st Reading: 1 Jn 4:19-5:4
Gospel: Lk 4:14-22

Jesus acted with the power of the Spirit, and on his return to Galilee the news about him spread throughout all that territory. He began teaching in the synagogues of the Jews and everyone praised him.

When Jesus came to Nazareth where he had been brought up, he entered the synagogue on the Sabbath as he usually did. He stood up to read and they handed him the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Jesus then unrolled the scroll and found the place where it is written: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and new sight to the blind; to free the oppressed and announce the Lord's year of mercy."

Jesus then rolled up the scroll, gave it to the attendant and sat down, while the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he said to them, "Today these prophetic words come true even as you listen." All agreed with him and were lost in wonder, while he kept on speaking of the grace of God. Nevertheless they asked, "Who is this but Joseph's son?"

Commentary

Joy for the poor, freedom for prisoners and the oppressed, sight to the blind: these are the gifts Jesus promises to bring as he proclaims God's inbreaking Kingdom. In fact, Jesus proclaims that these promises are already fulfilled in the hearing of the people of Nazareth. It might be a good time then to reflect on the fulfillment in our own lives of the messianic promises. What joy, what freedom, what sight have we received? How aware are we of these gifts, how grateful are we for them? We are also invited to remember that these are the gifts that we, who continue Jesus' mission, are supposed to bear to God's beloved people, especially the poor. What joy, freedom, and sight have the poor received through our service?

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

REMEDIAL LAW (CRIMINAL PROCEDURE/EVIDENCE)—Requisites to sustain a conviction of an accused based on circumstantial evidence—The requisites to sustain a conviction of an accused based on circumstantial evidence are: (1) there must be more than one circumstance; (2) the inference must be based on proven facts; and (3) the combination of all circumstances produces a conviction beyond reasonable doubt of the guilt of the accused. In the appreciation of circumstantial evidence, there are four basic guidelines: (1) it should be acted upon with caution; (2) all the essential facts must be consistent with the hypothesis of guilt; (3) the facts must exclude every other theory but that of guilt; and (4) the facts must establish such a certainty of guilt of the accused as to convince the judgment beyond a reasonable doubt that the accused is the one who committed the offense. [Citations omitted.] [En Banc, Justice Austria-Martinez, People v. Ochate, G. R. No. 127154, July 30, 2002] DIGEST BY R. B. VERA

METROBRIEFS

Manhunt on for security agency officials

THE POLICE are now looking for the operations chiefs of two security agencies, whose men engaged in a gunfight in Pasig City over the weekend, leaving one dead and another wounded. Policemen have identified the security men as Manuel Castro of the Task Force Security Agency and Raul Monte of the St. Vincent Security Agency. Witnesses told police that it was Castro and Monte who ordered their respective men to open fire. Investigators said the gun battle happened shortly after 12:30 p.m. when TFSA guards prevented SVSA security personnel from entering the former Payanig sa Pasig compound in Barangay Ugong. Police records showed that the Presidential Commission on Good Government has sequestered the controversial compound, but the Madrigal-Acop Estate, which has interests in the property, has contested the sequestration. *Nelson Flores*

20 houses razed in Balic-Balic fire

A FIRE broke in a two-story apartment on Gerardo Street, Balic-Balic, Sampaloc, Manila, and spread to around 20 other houses, according to arson investigator Rodelio P. Nelvis of the Manila Fire Department. Authorities pegged property damage at P5 million. Jesus Masangkay, 48, was reportedly hurt in the two-hour fire that broke out in the apartment owned by Matilde Salud at 9:09 a.m. The fire quickly spread to other houses on Leyte Stree. before it was put out at 11:04 a.m., Nelvis said. *Philip Tubeza*

Comfort room row

PHOTOGRAPHER Ronnie Villas was stabbed by his neighbor Domingo Carbonell in Quezon City on Monday night after the two argued over who should clean the dirty comfort room which they shared. Villas, 39, of Laurel Street, Commonwealth Heights, Quezon City, went to his neighbor's house at around 10 p.m. to ask Carbonell, 45, to clean up the toilet. While the two were arguing, Carbonell lost his temper, pulled out a bladed weapon and stabbed the victim in the chest, according to a Central Police District report. Barangay watchmen caught Carbonell as he was trying to flee. Villas died while he was being taken to the Fairview General Hospital, police said. *Alcuin Papa*

Last stop for FX robbers

POLICE on Monday night arrested three men shortly after they allegedly robbed four passengers of an FX van at about 9:45 p.m. at the corner of Aurora Boulevard and G. Reyes Street in Barangay Balong Bato, San Juan. Members of the San Juan Police Precinct 6 arrested Mateo Juego 18, Elmer Sispene, 19, Rency Monte, 19, all residents of Quiapo, Manila, as they were about to flee on board a passenger jeep bound for Cubao, Quezon City. Police seized an unlicensed .38-caliber homemade revolver and two fan knives from the suspects. They also recovered a Tag Heuer wristwatch, a gold ring, gold necklace and a cellular phone which belonged to their victims, said PO3 Florendo Laureaga of the San Juan police. *Nelson Flores*

Dead in the arms of his neighbor

EDGAR Metchaler died in the arms of his neighbor in Quezon City on Sunday, police said. Metchaler, 40, of Novaliches, Quezon City, was bleeding heavily when he ran to his neighbor Robert Baga, who was buying cigarettes from a store inside the Maridez Compound at around 4 p.m., according to Central Police District investigators. Baga saw that Metchaler had been stabbed and tried to take him to the Bernardino Hospital, but he was too late. Police are still trying to determine why someone would want Metchaler dead. *Alcuin Papa*

Man killed while waiting for his wife

ROGELIO Tanesa, 27, was shot and killed while he was waiting for his wife to come home in Quezon City on Sunday night, police said. Tanesa, of Barangay Old Balara, Tandang Sora, Quezon City, was declared dead on arrival at the East Avenue Medical Center, according to PO1 Leonino Pasco of the Central Police District. Police said Tanesa was standing on Commonwealth Avenue waiting for his wife Dang to come home when two men on board a motorcycle pulled up in front of the victim and shot him at around 8 p.m. *Alcuin Papa*

Farmers protest SC handling of Yulo land case

By Philip Tubeza

AROUND 100 agrarian reform beneficiaries yesterday picketed the Supreme Court to press their case against a development firm owned by the family of Estrada housing czar Sel Yulo.

The farmers are battling the Yulos for the control of 254.6 hectares of land in Barangay Casile, Cabuyao, Laguna.

Although the Department of Agrarian Reform Adjudication Board (Darab) awarded the land to the farmers in December 1991, the High Court decided last year that the Darab again review the case because the Yulos allegedly have evidence that the land is a watershed area.

"This is very painful for us," said Rey Lazo, one of farmer beneficiaries. "We are losing hope in the law."

Of the 82 beneficiaries, 17 have died since the farmers began their legal battle 15 years ago.

The farmers also continue to pay the Land Bank of the Philippines for the land's amortization, and the local government for the taxes.

Lazo said the farmers were given Certificate of Land Ownership Awards and Transfer Certificates of Title on Feb. 26, 1992, but the Yulo-owned Sta. Rosa Realty Development Corporation contested the ownership of the land.

Sta. Rosa Realty claimed that the parcels of land are "watersheds, that provide clean potable water to the Canlubang community, and that 90 light industries are located in the area."

The farmers said that the Darab sided with them and decided that the Yulos had no evidence that the land is a "watershed."

"And if it is a watershed area, then the land should be owned by the government," Lazo said.

On Nov. 5, 1993, the Court of Appeals junked the Yulos' appeal.

But on Nov. 20, the SC First Division decided to remand the case to the Darab.

"We do not know what happened at the SC," the farmers said in a statement. "If the justices only read the 'records' of the case, they would not have come out with that decision."

The farmers have filed a motion for the Supreme Court en banc to hear the case and overturn the First Division's decision.

People, Events & Products

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Aries Espinosa, Editor

aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

Fun family shopping as Festival Supermall opens new stores in 2003

IT'S THE start of the new year. And what better way to celebrate it with the whole family than at Festival Supermall at Filinvest Alabang. Now with more stores than ever to serve even the most discerning customers.

If it's clothes you're looking for, you now have more choices as newly opened boutiques such as Penshoppe Ladies, Page, Union Bay, Ducks Unlimited, Lhasa, Babo, and Capricho offer clothes for all occasions. For the trendy, Sari-Sari and Forever 21 are the stores for you.

For the fashionable lady, wardrobes are not complete without matching accessories. Match the hue of her new dress with glasses from Sunglass Station and bags from D Mop which carries the Babila line from Hong Kong. Complete the new look with diamond jewelry from Orodiam. For male yuppies, there's Memo and the soon-to-open Van Heussen for their clothes.

Guys can get sporty with clothes, shoes and accessories from And1, Dr. Martens and the upcoming Adidas Lifestyle Store.

For the jetsetter, U2M offers a collection of luggage to suit your needs. The Leather Gallery, on the other hand, has a wide selection of leather goods which you can match with your luggage or use everyday.

Kids can find a great way to spend their leisure time with the coolest hobby items found in Comic Quest and the soon-to-open Nintendo Store. Teen techies and gadget lovers can visit Tronix Imaging and soon, Time Depot, Electronics Depot and Singulus.

Mothers can dress up their homes with the best décor, furniture and other home furnishings at Festival Supermall's Duralco, Klappstuhl and La Venere. There's also Antiques Fair, a gathering of the country's top antique dealers who offer exquisite vintage items, and Décor Plus that sells an array of home furnishings.

After a tiring day, indulge in relaxing facial services from Elvie's Beauty Care, or a complete body treatment at the Ageless Center. Moms can also bond with their daughters while getting a new look at Going Straight Salon or at Ystilo.

A newly opened Manila Hearing Aid branch also offers superb service for hearing aid needs.

Treat the whole family to a tummy-filling feast Aside from Festival Supermall's restaurants and food outlets, there's the new Popeye for great chicken dishes, or Ted's La Paz Batchoy, which serves the classic Filipino dish.

It's truly a fun shopping experience for every member of the family as Festival Supermall gives you more choices this new year.

ProductFILES

Clara Ole

CLARA Ole is a line of tomato sauce products which offer other traditional favorites like sweet and Italian style spaghetti sauce and the more "adventurous" sauces like the Marinara, Primavera, and Onion Garlic Classic Pasta Sauces.

These six sauces were carefully formulated and made with only the best ingredients—giving this 100-percent Filipino brand world-class quality. Being in competition with many other sauce brands in the country, Clara Ole has bested the others with its distinct flavor and top-of-the-line product quality. Coupled with its commitment to provide the Filipino market with high-quality products at an affordable price, the 2002 Yearender Excellence Awards Committee and the National Consumer Affairs Foundation granted Clara Ole the Consumer Excellence Award for Top Tomato Sauce of the Year. With this honor, Clara Ole is committed to constantly reward consumers with more value, provide innovative and practical culinary delights for the Filipino family, and relentlessly strive for product excellence, transforming every day ordinary dishes into a sumptuous feast like no other sauce can.

LORENZO RESORTS SUPPORTS CABLE CONVENTION 2003

Cable Convention 2003, the flagship project of the Philippine Cable Television Association (PCTA), gets full support from Lorenzo Resorts Boracay. The contract was inked by Tony V. Selda, convention overall chair and director, PCTA and Jenny B. Jimenez, AVP sales and marketing, Lorenzo Resorts Boracay. Looking on are (from left) J. Manuel Dabao, president, PCTA, and Alvin Jimenez, VP for administration and finance, Lorenzo Resorts Boracay. The 11th Cable Convention, with the theme 'Forging 1 Future', is set from April 9 to 11 at Edsa Shangri-la Manila, Mandaluyong City.

MATH QUIZ TOPSCORER

Chancellor Galiza, a 4th year BS in Computer Science and Information Technology student of the Asia Pacific College (APC) was among the highest scorers in the first MSA Math Quiz held recently at the Rizal Ballroom of the Shangri-la Hotel Makati. He is shown being congratulated by APC president Dr. Paulino Y. Tan as he receives his certificate of citation while other APC officials look on.

BITS Clips

Society homecoming

THE FEU-NRMF Medical Society Inc. will have a grand alumni homecoming, silver jubilee celebration of Class '77 and scientific convention from Jan. 16 to 18 to be held at the 5th floor of Dr. Ricardo Alfonso Hall, FEU-NRMF Medical Center, Regalado Avenue, West Fairview, Quezon City. Honorees are the Class of '57, '62, '67, '72, '82, '87, '92 and '97. The grand alumni night and silver jubilee will be held on Jan. 18 at 6 p.m. at the Westin Philippine Plaza Hotel. There will be ballroom and disco dancing and a live band. For more details, call Cely Templanza-Ocampo at 935-0025, 936-7151 or 0917-4781640.

New site for Banco de Oro

THE BANCO de Oro branch at the upper ground floor of SM Megamall is now in a bigger location. Formerly facing Edsa, it is now along Bank Drive, at 115(A) upper ground floor of SM Megamall Building A. Banco de Oro's new location provides clients with two access points—right inside the mall or from the bank's own entrance. The branch offers regular savings and checking accounts, remittance service, foreign exchange service, various business loans and investment products such as Premium Growth Fund, Premium Income Fund, Smart Money Funds, and insurance. Banco de Oro has also started to offer the $ Super Savings Account which gives a higher tiered interest rates to US Dollar depositors. Banking hours are longer—from 9:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

WedExpo choral tilt

ALL CHORAL groups with at least 16 members are invited to join the 1st Wedding Expo Philippines Choir Competition which will be held on March 1 and 2 at the NBC Tent Cocktail Grounds. Choir members must be 16 years old and above. P50,000 cash awaits the Grand Prize winner. A Premyo Publiko based on audience votes will also be given. Patterned after European choral contests, this competition intends to showcase world-class Filipino talents in choral performance through liturgical compositions and love songs usually sung in weddings. For details, call Themes & Motifs – The Special Events Co. at 371-9783/410-0032, or visit www.weddingexpophil.com. Deadline for registration is on Jan. 15.

4th Postgrad Course

THE LUNGSOD ng Kabataan Alumni Association Inc. will hold its 4th Postgraduate course on Jan. 28 and 29 with the theme "Everyday Pediatrics 4." This year's course will be held at the Manila Galleria Suites, Ortigas Center, Pasig City. The whole concept of this year's seminar will cover common pediatric problems through interactive sessions, panel discussions and lectures. The course is accredited by PPS, PAFP and PMA. For further details and reservations call at 924-6601 to 25 loc. 278 (Rodelia G. Cipriano, M.D.) or at 924-6601 to 25 loc. 281 (Michael M. Resurreccion MD).

Lecture series on investment in real estate

TO PROVIDE helpful guidelines to the benefits of beginning and prospective real estate investors, dealers, developers and professionals, a seminar on "Investing in Real Estate" will be conducted by the Urban Institute of Real Estate on Jan. 22, 1:30 to 6 p.m. at Max's Restaurant, Level 4, Robinsons Metro East, Marcos Highway, Dela Paz, Pasig City (near Quezon City and Marikina).

The 4-hour lecture will cover the different opportunities and techniques in real estate investments, which include investing in vacant land—why and why not to buy and sell or lease; buy, build and sell/lease; rehabilitation of distressed and damaged properties; master leasing; leasing with option to buy; converting apartments; and developing small vacant lands.

Also included is a general introduction to all the basic knowledge that is essential to a profitable and successful real estate investment such as real estate economics, legal and contract documents, financing and analyzing investments, property appraisal, property development, development rules and regulations, property management, real estate taxation, property valuation or appraisal.

This seminar will immediately be followed by a series of detailed lectures at the same time and venue on the following dates: Jan. 23—real estate finance and investment analysis; Jan. 24—"Property Management" and "Real Estate Appraisal"; Jan. 27—HLURB rules and property development; Jan. 28—joint ventures and syndications; and on Jan. 29—"Real Estate Taxation" and "Contract Documentation and Registration."

For particulars, interested parties can call Urban Institute at 681-0928 or e-mail urbanet@pacific.net.ph.

Ang Sarap
BACOOR
Muñoz

DELPHIC ORACLE BAND WINS

Delphic Oracle band representatives OJ Zabala (center) and Benedict Garcia (3rd from left) show their certificates as winners of Goldilocks Foodshop's 5th of a series of mall shows titled 'Ang Sarap Pakinggan!...The Musical Caravan' held Nov. 16 at SM Bacoor Activity Center. The band from Elizabeth Seton School competed against the other four band finalists Dec. 16 at the SM City North Edsa. Posing with the band representatives are (from right) AB Communications MSD head Earl Navarro, the Goldilocks mascot, Goldilocks Foodshop marketing officer Orly Villanueva, game show host Emma Villanueva and AB Communications account assistant Ethel Dino.

THE FABANS REUNITE

The Fabans (Ateneo de Manila AB College Class '67) will jam with RJ on Friday, Jan. 10 at the Captain's Bar of the Mandarin Hotel. Shown (standing, from left) are Bing Azanza, Tito Osias, and Joey Moreno. Seated, from left, are Jun Salientes, Johnny Salientes and Rom Azanza. Experience the best live Rock n' Roll music only with RJ Jacinto and friends this Friday and every Friday night. Showtime is at 9 p.m. For reservations call 760-8888 local 2104 and ask for Badette. For other inquiries call 894-2362 and look for Eleanore.

Email: pr_pep@inquirer.com.ph

People, Events & Products

Aries Espinosa, Editor

aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

A good harvest to uplift life in Morong

IN A move to provide general upliftment for the townsfolk of Morong, Bataan, Good Harvest Orchards develops a vast tract of its property into mango orchards and a nature park to support environmental efforts in the area.

Good Harvest (GH) plans to sell these orchard plots through a unique agri-business venture that merges the principles of contract farming, orchard ownership and an innovative cooperative marketing plan.

The 86-hectare property in Morong, Bataan, is GH's pilot project I subdivided into 50 sq. m. lots. Each lot will have a mango tree that whose yield is of the exportable variety, as certified by the Department of Agriculture. Local tillers from the area will be hired, thus generating employment for the Morong farmers. Regardless of off-season mango farming, the additional varieties of fruit trees planted in the orchard ensures a steady, year-round income not only for the investor but for the workers as well.

A nature park that nurtures a meditative refuge is also being drawn out by master planner Palafox and Associates Inc. It features fancy mango trees, lush landscaping with water and rock themes, multi-purpose clubhouse, a grand entrance and expansive recreational facilities for the orchard owners. With these developments, the town can expect a boom in land appreciation that increases over the years. And through this initiative, GH supports the government's Luntiang Pilipinas, an environmental preservation project that promotes "greening" of the countryside as advocated by its proponent, Sen. Loren Legarda-Leviste.

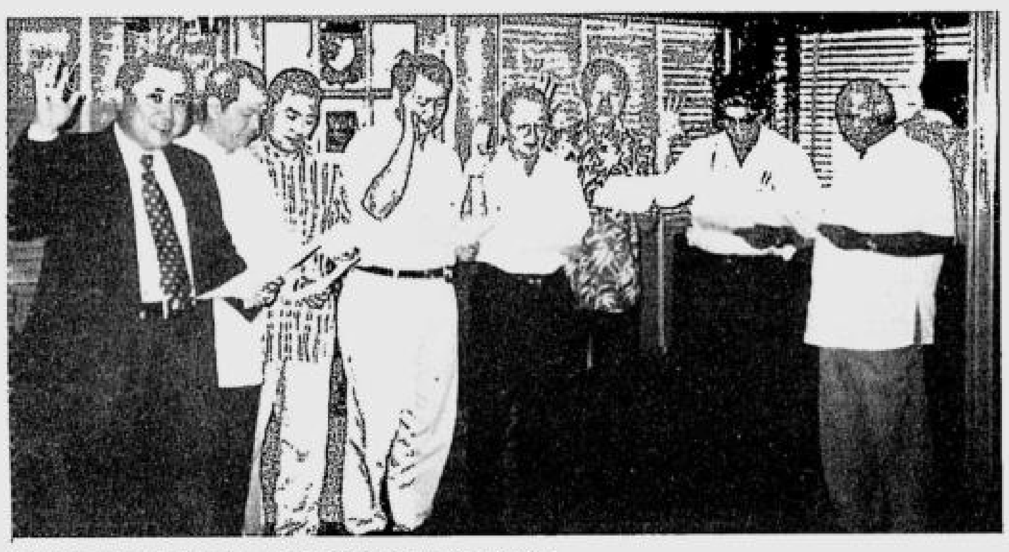
GH decided to venture into the mango export trade to meet the demands for this sought-after commodity in the global market. Philippine mango is reportedly the sweetest variety of its kind in the world.

It is ironic, however, that it only represents 2.5 percent of mango exports. In the United States, imports are rising at an average of 10 to 15 percent every year. Yet only a third of Americans have ever purchased mangoes. 88 percent of 2001 exports of over 108,000 metric tons were supplied by Mexico. Efforts have to be made to increase our production thrice as much.

Earning from owning a GH orchard plot is assured in five ways: greater ROI through land appreciation, yearly recurring dividends, up to 30-percent commission from direct selling, referral sales commissions, and from a periodic rewards scheme. On Nov. 9, 2002, hundreds of orchard business partners trooped to the orchard site at Sitio Ginian, Barangay Mabayo, for the ceremonial tree planting festival. Among the well wishers who attended the festival were DILG Bataan Director Romeo Bontoyan, representing DILG Secretary Joey Lina and PNP Provincial Commander of Bataan Col. Salim, as representative of Region III PNP Director Gen. Oscar Calderon.

BLESSING OF NEW BMI OFFICES

The new Belco Marketing Inc. offices at the 2nd floor of Harrison Plaza were officially unveiled recently with the traditional ribbon-cutting ceremony and blessing by Fr. Constantino DC Conti, parish priest of Our Lady of Assumption Parish in Malate. The sleek, contemporary design of both the executive and administrative offices was the work of architect Pitpit Mercado. Guests of honor requested to cut the ribbon were Harrison Plaza president Antonio V. Martel Jr., (2nd from left) and Don Sanders of the US Embassy (3rd from right), assisted by BMI chair Belen Ticzon Martel (3rd from left). With them are BMI officers Salvador T. Clemente, president, Ophelia T. Clemente (2nd from right), VP for marketing, Juliet I. Ticzon (left), VP-finance, McAnt managing director Julius D. Ticzon, and BMI business development manager Jaclyn T. Clemente.



PULPAPEL NEW OFFICERS FOR 2003

Bombit Aragon, former chair of the Pulp and Paper Manufacturers Association Inc (Pulpapel), and at present a consultant of Picop Resources Inc., inducted the officers for 2003 during a luncheon meeting Dec. 11 at Whistlestop Libis, Quezon City. Sworn in, from left, are George S. Chua, president, Miguel del Rosario, 1st vice president, Victor Pascual, 2nd vice president, David Hwang, treasurer, Joey Gan, assistant treasurer, Robert Lim, auditor, and Amando T. Rios, board secretary. Pulpapel is the lead organization serving as the voice of the paper industry in representing the sector with concerned government agencies on tariff, customs, trade practices and other related matters.

Sony keeps overall leadership at 29th BPI Madness

SONY Philippines Inc. has once again dominated and proven that it is the most preferred brand in consumer electronics with its sales performance at the recent 29th BPI Installment Madness-Hysteria sa Glorietta Promo. During the 18-day event at Glorietta Activity Center in Makati, Sony Philippines achieved P18 million in total sales, far exceeding the company's expectations.

Sony Philippines has maintained its overall leadership in eight successive BPI Madness fairs since July 2000.

Sony's product categories during the 29th BPI Madness included FD Trinitron Wega Color TV with the highest sales in a single category, trailing next is Personal Video, which includes Handycam video camera, Cybershots, and Mavica digital still cameras. Other categories were Sony Hi-Fi components, Personal Audio consisting of Walkmans and Radio Cassettes, DVD Decks/Home Theater Systems, and Personal Audio/Personal Video accessories.

The BPI Fairs are regarded by the consumer electronics sector as a key indicator of industry sales performance and consumer preference trends in Metro Manila. Sony Philippine executives said the company's performance in the BPI Madness series demonstrates the public's confidence in the unmatched technology, quality, durability, and value of Sony products. The executives said consumers look up to Sony as the platinum standard for electronic consumer goods that increasingly merge information through digital technologies.

A key thrust of Sony is to offer to consumers product innovations made possible by revolutionary technologies that it has developed, such as the recently introduced MicroMV video camera format which is now the most compact and lightest video format in the world. These different product innovations are designed to link up into networks that enhance consumer lifestyles, anytime, anywhere.

The BPI Madness Fairs allow BPI cardholders to buy appliances at low interest rates and the most convenient terms. BPI provides the most advantageous opportunities for its cardholders, making the purchase of their dream gadgets affordable and feasible.

Hair Asia
LONDON

DELA VEGA: PRIDE OF JIPANG GROUP

This year's Hair Asia Battle of the Champions named Willy de la Vega as the overall champion. He won in two categories, the Ladies Cut and Color Division and the Evening Party Make-up Category. He bested out some 200 participants during the competition that took place Nov. 19 at the World Trade Center. Dela Vega is the operations manager of the Willy dela Vega Salon (from the group of Jipang Companies) located at the 6th floor of Networld Hotel, Jipang Building, Roxas Boulevard corner Gil Puyat Avenue, Pasay City. Shown from left are Andy Benwick (general manager of Networld Hotel), model Aileen Nillas, Willy dela Vega, model Eazel Don and engineer Leo Untalan (KYM project manager). Networld Hotel and KYM are from the Jipang Group of Companies who supported Dela Vega during the event.

New Mepi Awards 2002 searches for excellence

THE MARKETING Executives of the Pharmaceutical-Healthcare Industry has unveiled the New Mepi Excellence Awards 2002 to recognize, honor and award the industry's excellent marketing practices, people, and performance, and to continually raise the industry standard for innovation and excellence.

Mepi has recently concluded its acceptance of nominations for the most exceptional sales representative, district sales manager, and strategic business unit.

For the sales representative of the year award, nominees must be significant contributors to their company's sales growth. They must have implemented innovative marketing and promotions programs and must be analytical with good communication and presentation skills.

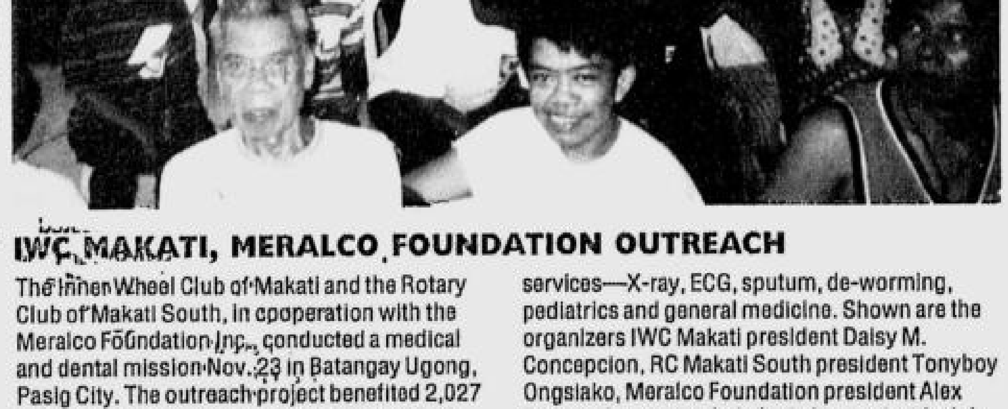
For the District Sales Manager of the Year Award, nominees must be great motivators with exceptional planning and organizing skills. Team members must have also consistently shown good sales performance.

For the Product Manager of the Year Award, nominees must have launched innovative programs resulting in exceptional sales and product profitability.

For the Strategic Business Unit of the Year Award, nominees will be judged according to their overall business innovations that it has introduced and social and environmental programs that it has launched.

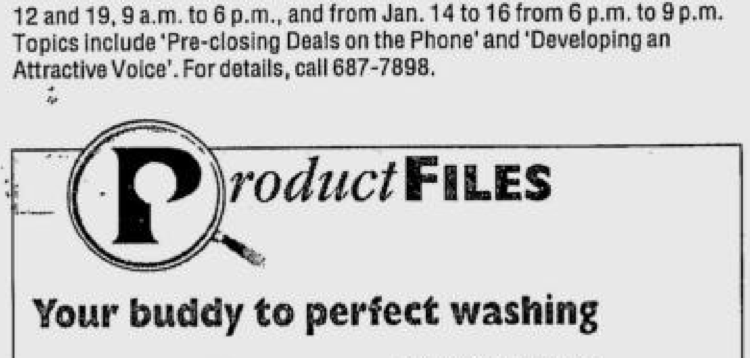
Established in 1989, Mepi continues to be committed to marketing excellence through a variety of educational and social consciousness programs. Mepi has 82 members representing 57 pharmaceutical and healthcare companies.

For inquiries, call the Mepi offices at 810-7029 and 757-1800, or e-mail mepi@info.com.ph.


FREE MEDICAL & DENTAL MISSION
INNER WHEEL CLUB OF MAKATI & THE ROTARY CLUB OF MAKATI SOUTH
IN COOPERATION WITH THE MERALCO FOUNDATION

IWC MAKATI, MERALCO FOUNDATION OUTREACH

The Inner Wheel Club of Makati and the Rotary Club of Makati South, in cooperation with the Meralco Foundation Inc., conducted a medical and dental mission Nov. 23 in Batangay Ugong, Pasig City. The outreach project benefited 2,027 indigent residents from the area. The medical outreach provided an almost complete line of services—X-ray, ECG, sputum, de-worming, pediatrics and general medicine. Shown are the organizers IWC Makati president Daisy M. Concepcion, RC Makati South president Tonyboy Ongsiako, Meralco Foundation president Alex Escano, barangay chair Arnie Legaspi with club members, doctors, and patients.



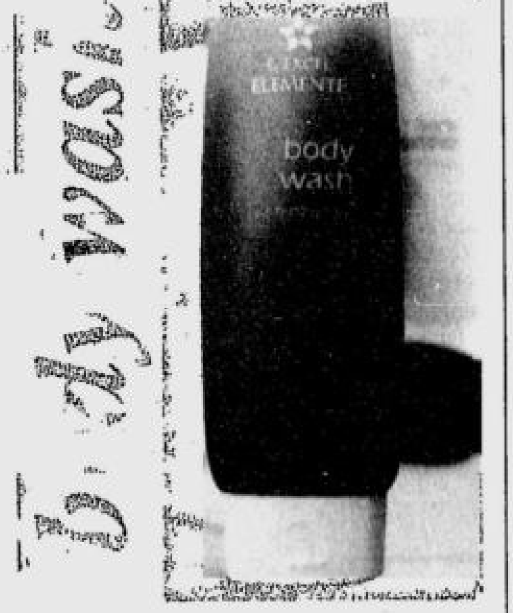
TELEMARKETING SEMINAR-WORKSHOP

The Corporate Mind chief training consultant Joscephine Gomez (right) drills Dr. Arlene Sanchez (left), Manulife agent, in one of the runs of the results-oriented Telemarketing Seminar-Workshop held at the Manila Galleria Suites. The highly acclaimed seminar goes on another run on Jan. 12 and 19, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., and from Jan. 14 to 16 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Topics include 'Pre-closing Deals on the Phone' and 'Developing an Attractive Voice'. For details, call 687-7898.

Product FILES

Your buddy to perfect washing

PAMPER yourself all over with E. Excel Elemente's Body Wash. Made from ginseng berry, cactus fruit, and grape seed extracts, it purifies and moisturizes the skin for a smooth, supple finish. Best of all, you don't need a bathtub to enjoy E. Excel's Body Wash; just use it in place of your conventional bar soap and have a relaxing bath. For perfect body washing, E. Excel's Body Wash is the perfect company.



E-mail: pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Louie C. Camino

Boob-tube booboos

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

HOST: What do you predict will happen next year?

Guest: *Ayon sa aking* vibrations, this next year will be a year *para sa pamilya at tahanan.*

Host: Oh? In what way?

Guest: Well, in the way, *sa nakikita ko, na magkakaroon ng mas maraming* rape *at* incestous!

(*Ano* ?!?)

***

Host: What about my career-what do you see for next year?

Guest: Very good—*magbubush ang* career *mo* next year!

(You mean, like the US president? Hey, that sounds bad . . .)

***

Co-host: *Ako naman*, what will the next year bring for me?

Guest: In what area?

Co-host: Love life! I need a love life!

Guest: Hmmm . . . *hindi maganda ang* love life *mo* next year—*pero mabubuntis ka naman*!

(Win some, lose some!)

***

Host: Can you tell us, in the field of politics, who will run for president in 2004?

Guest: I'm sorry, but it's too early. By the third quarter next year, I can give you a better prediction of *kung sino ang tatakbo* among the presidential appearance.

(Appearance? Appearance?—Ah, presidential aspirants!)

***

Host: What I want to know, last question *ko na*, is: how will my present relationship turn out?

Guest: *Sa* present relationship *mo, magkakaroon ka ng anak, posibleng mabuntis.*

(*Sino'ng mabubuntis? Huwag naman sana yung bago kong anak!*)

***

Host: Will you introduce our next guest? In Tagalog?

Co-host: Well, I'll try: *Ang* next guest *natin ay* well-known. *Lahat ay umaabangan ang kanyang* blind items—*ay, tama ba ang* Tagalog *ko*?

(*Hindi*!!!)

***

Host: On your birthday today, whom do you want to thank for what you've become?

Guest: Above all, my father. *Siya siguro ang dahilan kaya ganito ako ngayon*—strong, survival!

(—*At mali ang* vocabulary!)

***

Host: What do you like to do on your free time?

Guest: I like watching old movies on tape!

Host: Any particular titles you can recommend?

Guest: I like anything—as long as they're oldies but movies!

(Cute!)

'The Ring'

A VIDEOTAPE filled with nightmarish images leads to a phone call that foretells the viewer's death in one week's time—that's the scary hook of **Naomi Watts**' latest starrer, "The Ring." Watts plays a newspaper reporter who's skeptical about the tape's "curse" until she tracks down the video—and watches it. To save herself and her young son, she has only seven days to unravel the tape's deadly secret.

'Catch Me If You Can'

FANS of **Leonardo DiCaprio** will be thrilled to learn that their favorite young actor has a new film all set to be shown, and it looks like it's going to be a hit. Aside from DiCaprio, the movie, "Catch Me If You Can," also stars none other than **Tom Hanks**, and is directed by **Steven Spielberg**.

In his new film, DiCaprio plays a young con man who has worked as a doctor, lawyer and airplane pilot—before his 21st birthday! A master of deception, he's also a brilliant forger whose skill at check fraud has netted him millions of dollars in stolen money.

Hanks plays the determined FBI agent who chases the con artist all over the country, eventually bringing him to justice. "Catch Me If You Can" also stars **Christopher Walken**, **Martin Sheen** and **James Brolin**.

It is hoped that, with the success of this movie and his other new starrer, "Gangs of New York" (directed by **Martin Scorsese**), DiCaprio will regain his preeminent position among young-adult male stars in Hollywood, which he lost when his post-"Titanic" movies like "The Beach" didn't do "as well as expected" (translation: flopped).

At 28 years of age, DiCaprio is much too young to be a has-been, and if he continues to get his filmic act together, he's clearly talented enough to have many good filmmaking years ahead of him.

Bong to get citation in Hollywood for anti-piracy crusade

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

HEARD that **Bong Revilla** will be given a citation by the Association of Motion Pictures in Hollywood for his relentless anti-piracy crusade as Videogram Regulatory Board (VRB) chief.

Isn't it quite ironic that local organizations fail (or simply refuse) to recognize Bong's all-out efforts to eradicate video piracy?

It's high-time some Filipinos iron out all the ironies that go with a crab mentality. Why be crabby about other people's achievements? Wouldn't it be a more pleasant world if all the "crabs" around us will turn into lobsters lobbying for grandiose changes?

The new year ought to generate a fresher catch. As the cliché goes, there are many fish in the ocean. But if I may add, not all of them are barracudas. Sink or swim they say.

Kudos to Bong for staying afloat in rough VRB waters.

What does Danilo want?

I WATCHED "Spirit Warriors 2: Shortcut," since I had to review the film for my "Dollywood" segment in "Magandang Umaga Bayan."

For a local film, the visual effects were impressive enough. We may still be lagging by Hollywood standards but if it's any consolation, some serious local filmmakers dare to experiment and improve. They do what's doable and sometimes they manage to outdo themselves.

In "Spirit Warriors 2," the central character was portrayed by **Danilo Barrios**, but there were many instances his sidekick **Vhong Navarro** outshone him. Vhong has a natural flair for comedy. The audience lapped up his curt yet hilarious one-liners. Although Danilo did a fine job, too, he needs to loosen up a bit more.

You can sense that Danilo still has some reservations. He's drop-dead gorgeous alright, but he must be less self-absorbed.

Maybe because he's still in a quandary if he prefers to be a matinee idol, action star or a drama prince. In time, I'm sure Danilo will evolve into a more impassioned actor.

For Vhong's part, he has definitely found his niche in comedy that's why he couldn't care less even if his face registers on screen with all sorts of contortions and doesn't mind being trampled upon.

Pretty boys like Danilo (whom show biz folk refer to as "*walang anggulo*" meaning that he looks good in whatever angle) are often too conscious about their good looks that they fail to give their all.

Great close-ups guarantee that you're on your way up, but there must be something to replace it when your charm begins to fade.

Guess list

GUESS who this shrewd businessman is who manages some bands. He is such a slave driver who drives band members nuts. Many singers he used to handle have opted to transfer to other bands because they can no longer stand his perfectionist ways.

With Mr. Shrewd, bands don't bond because he makes work seem like a bondage.

Guess who this actor and former politico is who used to run to his non-show biz friend for every conceivable favor. From fetching him when he's grounded to helping him woo a girl, etc.

The high school buddies drifted apart but one day they bumped into each other during an affair in the House of Representatives. Naturally, Mr. Politico's friend was so ecstatic to see him so he immediately approached and congratulated him for his good fortune.

Mr. Politico gave him the cold shoulder as if he was a stranger.

Politics and friendship do make strange bedfellows for he's a grumpy bad fellow.

Collective exhibit

ALLIANCE Francaise de Manille brings contemporary French graphic design to the Philippines in the form of a collective exhibit, made possible by Le Centre Pompidou with AFAA (Association Francaise d'Action Artistique) and the French Embassy in Manila.

In the vast world of the visual arts, graphic design in France is at present time particularly lively, with a wealth of new talent. "Signes" is a paneled-exhibit composed of graphic designers **Rik Bas Backer**, **Pascal Colrat**, **Laurent Fetis**, **Muriel Paris**, **Alex Singer**, **Laurent Seroussi**, **Martin Verdet** and **Philippe Laktis**.

The young artists intervene in all areas where graphic design is especially solicited: posters, publishing, visual identity, multimedia and audiovisual productions.

The exhibit offers a deeper appreciation of contemporary art, as well as a unique understanding of the growing role graphic design plays in modern society.

Opening night is Jan. 13, Monday. Cocktails will be served at 6:30 p.m. at Alliance Francaise de Manille Gallery (209 Nicanor Garcia St., Bel-Air II Makati). Exhibit will run till Jan. 31. For inquiries, call 895-7585 or 895-7441.

For feedback, e-mail friends_at_dsquare@yahoo.com

Former Yano members make up Pan duo

BMG Records Pilipinas introduces Pan, a duo composed of former Yano bandmates Dong Abay and Onie Badiang, both making an exciting comeback to the local music scene after a five-year hiatus.

Together, they offer their debut album, "Parnaso ng Payaso," a satisfying mix of songs that represent today's growing social complexities and concerns.

The band is named after the enchanting mythical creature, Pan. Half-man and half-goat, the Greek god was believed to have dwelled in the woods, playing music from his flute and stirring ecstatic emotions in those who hear it.

In many interesting ways, the band could not have been more appropriately named because the word "pan" also means many other things that relate well to the duo.

For one, it means "all," describing the band's all-Filipino sentiments and vast musical styles and themes that tackle ideas of love, tragedy, ambition, the supernatural, nature and more.

A pan is also a popular cooking instrument and true to its purpose, the band makes great effort in cooking up an eclectic mix of sound and lyrics for the discriminating musical taste of Filipinos.

EXCITING COMEBACK. Former Yano bandmates Dong Abay and Onie Badiang return as Pan with a new album.

A product of Dong Abay's desire to create and write music, Pan's goal, like that of the mythical Greek god, is to produce simple but spellbinding tunes that could move the emotions of listeners.

During his absence from the music scene, Dong, a prolific songwriter, has already written three albums worth of songs. And just barely a year after forming this new band, they have already released their debut album under a major label.

He also found a new, more fun and positive outlook in life reflected in the songs of Pan.

"Parnaso ng Payaso" is an artistic stew of music, literature and visual artwork. The musical styles vary from punk, rock 'n roll, funk, reggae and folk music. These serve as background to Dong's clever and witty poetry, all worded in Filipino (very rare these days).

Furthermore, the band utilizes another medium commonly neglected by other musicians. Photographed clay sculptures and abstract pastel drawings representing each song appear throughout the in-lay sheet of the CD, making it a complete package of colorful and creative artistry of both sight and sound.

The album title literally translates to "a collection of poems by a clown." However, that does not make "Parnaso ng Payaso" a novelty album. In fact, the tracks may contain a lot of humor, but embedded in each cut are serious and relevant messages.

The album's first single, "Dumpsite," which was supposed to be titled "Ang Pinakamabahong Kanta sa Buong Mundo," playfully tackles the problem of pollution and carelessness.

A music video co-directed by Dong was recently completed for "Dumpsite."

The rest of the album's 14 tracks include "Kahimanawari," the first song Dong wrote upon his return to music. Other selections are "Gusto," "Precious" and "Hula"—all strong contenders for hit radio singles.

"Parnaso ng Payaso" would not be complete without Dong Abay-signature songs like "Kawatan," "Rebolusyon," "Tayo" and "Mabuhay," which tackle social issues.

Overall, the band is definitely the real deal. One would just have to catch any of Pan's live performances to see how people react to their set.

Dong and Onie collaborate with session members Duane Cruz and Melvin Leyson who handle the bass and drum duties respectively during live gigs.

"Parnaso ng Payaso" is now available in CDs and cassettes in record stores nationwide, released under BMG Records Pilipinas.

ON THE RISE. Maxene Magalona making waves both on TV and the movies.

Maxene, sweet 15

By Remy M. Umerez
Contributor

SWEET 15 and never been kissed aptly applies to Maxene Magalona, daughter of rapper Francis Magalona and the granddaughter of the revered and loved couple Pancho Magalona and Tita Duran.

Maxene, who is a third year high school student at the Montessori Integrated School in Antipolo, became a TV commercial talent, which paved the way for her show biz salvo.

Last year, she appeared in two films. She joined the original cast of the blockbuster movie "Bahay ni Lola" for its sequel, "Singsing ni Lola."

Maxene was also in the powerhouse cast of Regal Entertainment's Metro Manila Film Festival entry, "Mano Po." She played the young Boots Anson-Roa, opposite Cogie Domingo as the young Eddie Garcia.

Talking and listening to Maxene is like journeying back to our adolescent years. She certainly made us feel young again.

Charm

Maxene impressed us with her charm, wit and warmth as she gave direct-to-the point answers.

To start with, she loves animals and cats are among them.

In the horror movie, the existence of a black cat that possess the cursed ring played an integral role.

It is because of a cat, not necessarily black, but a stray one, which made her parents mad when Maxene brought it home with her.

"*Naawa kasi ako at gumagala sa* streets. I was in Grade 7 then and I was not aware the bodily harm a cat can do to a person with asthma. That was the only time I got a severe scolding from my mom," she recalls.

In "Singsing ni Lola," Maxene didn't simply go around screaming and shouting. She played the daughter of Gina Alajar and Joel Torre who was possessed by an evil spirit, just like Linda Blair in "The Exorcist."

In the horror story, it was established that Maxene had a boyfriend in the person of newcomer Railey Valeroso, who used to play basketball for the high school varsity team of UP where he is now in college.

A TV kid, Railey is one of the regulars on GMA 7's youth-oriented show, "Click."

It is understandable why boys get easily attracted to Maxene whose only interest toward the opposite sex is limited to crushes.

Action star Vin Diesel, who is almost twice her age, is one of her favorites.

On the local front, Maxene's choice is Dingdong Dantes "because he is *tsinito*."

No secrets

She hides no secrets to her parents who raised Maxene and her other seven siblings to fear God, know the value of hardship, respect of the elders and dignity of labor.

Maxene has a special bonding with her dad Francis, who is forever watchful on the boys showing special liking to her daughter.

"My mom is more particular about my going out and she sets a curfew which I really don't mind," Maxene allows. "Both of them monitor my grades in school. I may not be in the dean's list but my grades are okay."

Her favorite subject is Math. Chemistry is the one she least likes.

She can rap, but not as good as her dad. She can also carry a tune though and once did a duet with her dad in "Put a Love in Your Heart."

At home, they are trained to help in the household chores, especially when there are no classes. Maxene is also tasked to do the laundry at times.

"What we can do ourselves, we do. That's the kind of discipline mom taught us. If we can get drinking water by ourselves, why ask the maid?"

Other projects

After "Mano Po," Maxene has other projects lined up for Regal and aimed to make her acting career soar.

She's in the cast of Jose Javier Reyes' forthcoming dramatic opus, "Anghel sa Lupa," where she plays the daughter of Dina Bonnevie who returns to the stable of Regal, the same company who launched her into full stardom in "Katorse."

Maxene continues to make waves on TV as one of the mainstays of the widely-followed GMA 7 sitcom, "Daddy Di Do Du," starring Vic Sotto.

When she goes to college, Maxene hopes to become a broadcast journalist.

If her Lolo Pancho and Lola Tita could only see Maxene now, they would have been the proudest about her achievements in show biz.

BUDDING ACTOR
Commercial model-turned-actor Juan Miguel "JM" de Guzman stars with multi-talented singer-actor Janno Gibbs in the life story of noted hairdresser Ricky Reyes, which will be dramatized in "Magpakailanman," Jan. 13, 9 p.m. on GMA 7. JM plays Totoy Reyes, youngest brother of Ricky. The drama anthology hosted by Mel Tiangco, is written by Jun Lana and directed by Argel Joseph. JM, a former "Ang TV 2" mainstay, has done commercials for PLDT, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Alaska and Quakecake, which are all presently airing on TV.

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2 LASTIKMAN
3 DEKADA '70 12:10, 2:45, 5:20, 7:55, 10:30
4 ANG ALAMAT NG LAWIN
5 ANG AGIMAT
6 MANO PO
7 HOME ALONE DA RIBER

GB1 GREENBELT 1
1 LASTIKMAN
2 MANO PO
Onstage
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GB3 GREENBELT 3
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MANO PO 12:40, 3:20, 6:00, 8:40, 11:20
LASTIKMAN 1:20, 3:50, 6:20, 8:50, 11:20
ANG AGIMAT 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30, 11:30
SPIRIT WARRIORS 2 12:05, 2:20, 4:35, 6:50, 9:05, 11:20

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2 AGIMAT
3 MANO PO

Sunshine
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2 DEKADA '70
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4 MANI PO

GOTESCO CINEMA

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5 AGIMAT
6 DEKADA '70
7 LASTIKMAN
8 HOME ALONG
9 SPIRIT WARRIOR THE SHORTCUT

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6 LASTIKMAN
7 MANO PO
8 HULI MO HULI KO
9 ALAMAT NG LAWIN

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3 HULA MO HULI KO

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3 ALAMAT NG LAWIN
4 LASTIKMAN

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3 MANO PO

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7 AGIMAT
8 ALAMAT NG LAWIN
9 LASTIKMAN
10 SPIRIT WARRIORS 2

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9350749
1 HULA MO, HULI KO
2 DEKADA '70
3 HOME ALONE DA RIBER
4 AGIMAT
5 SPIRIT WARRIORS 2
6 LASTIKMAN
7 SPIRIT WARRIORS 2
8 LASTIKMAN
9 MANO PO
10 LAPU LAPU
11 LASTIKMAN
12 ALAMAT NG LAWIN

SM CITY MANILA
5239240
1 SPIRIT WARRIORS 2
2 MANO PO
3 ALAMAT NG LAWIN
4 LASTIKMAN
5 DEKADA '70
6 AGIMAT
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11 MANO PO
12 SPIRIT WARRIORS 2

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1 MANO PO
2 AGIMAT
3 LASTIKMAN
4 SPIRIT WARRIORS 2
5 ALAMAT NG LAWIN
6 LAPU LAPU
7 HULA MO, HULI KO
8 MANO PO
9 LASTIKMAN
10 SPIRIT WARRIORS 2
11 DEKADA '70
12 HOME ALONE DA RIBER

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2 HOME ALONE DA RIBER
3 ALAMAT NG LAWIN
4 DEKADA '70
5 MANO PO
6 LASTIKMAN
7 SPIRIT WARRIORS 2
8 AGIMAT

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2 DEKADA '70
3 AGIMAT
4 LASTIKMAN
5 ALAMAT NG LAWIN
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7 MANO PO
8 SPIRIT WARRIORS 2
9 LASTIKMAN
10 SPIRIT WARRIORS 2

SM CITY CEBU
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1 MANO PO
2 AGIMAT
3 HOME ALONE DA RIBER
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5 LASTIKMAN
6 SPIRIT WARRIORS 2
7 ALAMAT NG LAWIN
8 MANO PO

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1 DEKADA '70
2 CLOSED
3 HULA MO, HULI KO
4 MANO PO
5 LASTIKMAN
6 SPIRIT WARRIORS 2
7 CLOSED
8 REPLI-KATE

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3 MANO PO
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6 SPIRIT WARRIORS 2

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2 LASTIKMAN
3 SPIRIT WARRIORS 2
4 MANO PO

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1 SPIRIT WARRIORS 2
2 LASTIKMAN
3 MANO PO
4 AGIMAT

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1 SPIRIT WARRIORS 2
2 HOME ALONE DA RIBER
3 MANO PO
4 DEKADA '70
5 LASTIKMAN
6 AGIMAT

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1 SPIRIT WARRIORS 2
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3 LASTIKMAN
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7 MANO PO

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8 SPIRIT WARRIORS

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8 SPIRIT WARRIORS

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3 AGIMAT
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4 LASTIKMAN
5 AGIMAT
6 DEKADA '70

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3 SPIRIT WARRIORS
4 LASTIKMAN
5 DEKADA '70
6 HOME ALONG DA RIBER

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3 SPIRIT WARRIORS
4 AGIMAT
5 MANO PO

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3 MANO PO
4 DEKADA '70
5 LASTIKMAN
6 HOME ALONG DA RIBER

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2 SPIRIT WARRIORS
3 LASTIKMAN
4 ALAMAT NG LAWIN
5 DEKADA '70
6 MANO PO

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HOLLYWOOD NOTES

Nearly 300 films in 2002 to compete for Oscar best picture

LOS ANGELES—Some 279 feature films will compete to win prized nominations for cinema's most prestigious award, the best picture Oscar for 2003.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, which organizes the Academy Awards, said that the best picture nominations—to be unveiled next month would be chosen from a short list of nearly 300 movies.

"This means that there were 279 films released in 2002 that are eligible to be nominated for best picture," said Academy spokesperson Dawn Newell.

"We will next week mail a complete list of those films along with nominations ballots to Academy voters, allowing them to nominate these movies or their actors, actresses and directors for awards this year," she added.

The posting of the nominations ballots means that Hollywood's frenzied awards season—that climaxes this year with the Oscars ceremony on March 23—has officially shifted in high gear.

Under Academy rules, a feature film must run for more than 40 minutes and have been shown on at least a few Los Angeles-area commercial cinema screens on 35mm or 70mm film during 2002 in order to qualify for an Oscar nomination.

The rules mean that many film-makers wait until the last week of the year to release Oscar eligible films, causing a glut of quality movies in December.

Hollywood's publicity machine then switches into overdrive, shamelessly advertising hopeful winners in the daily industry publications and on local radio and television ads in Los Angeles up until the Oscars ceremony.

However films submitted in the categories for best documentary, best foreign film, best animated feature and best short film have different eligibility requirements and are picked by special Academy voting panels.

This year's Oscar nominations will be announced in Beverly Hills on Feb. 11 and the awards will be handed out at a glittering ceremony in Hollywood about six weeks later. *AFP*

Ross for drunk driving

PHOENIX—Singer-actress Diana Ross was cited for investigation of drunk driving on Monday in southern Arizona, police said.

Ross, who rose to fame as a member of The Supremes, had a blood-alcohol of 0.20—more than twice the legal limit—when the vehicle she was driving was stopped at 12:30 a.m. in Tucson, said Sgt. Judy Altieri, a police spokesperson.

Ross, 58, was ticketed for three misdemeanors, including driving under the influence, driving with a blood-alcohol content over 0.08 and driving with a blood-alcohol level of more than 0.15, known as extreme DUI.

A Jan.13 initial court appearance has been tentatively scheduled.

Police said that they pulled over the vehicle after a report that the car had been swerving and that Ross was cooperative during the incident. She was released and taken to where she was staying at the time, authorities said.

Neither Ross nor her spokesperson could be reached for comment.

In May of this year, she checked into a drug and alcohol rehabilitation center in Malibu, California, before the start of a summer tour. At that time, her publicist told reporters she entered the center "to clear up some personal issues." *Reuters*

Dion's guardian angel

MONTREAL—Pop diva Celine Dion said she had lost a guardian angel after the death in Paris Friday of Algerian-born songwriter Eddy Marnay.

A renowned songwriter in his adopted France and abroad, Marnay, 82, also worked with Edith Piaf, Egyptian entertainer Dalida, French pop icon Claude Francois, American diva Barbra Streisand and Greek singer Nana Mouskouri.

But he had a special spot in his heart for Dion, whom he called "the voice of God" and helped in the early phase of her career, from the age of 13.

"Eddy Marnay was the guardian angel of the first steps of my childhood, of my life, he wrote more than 60 songs for me. My first five albums—he wrote them," the Canadian superstar told reporters by phone. *AFP*

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MANO PO GP 1:10,3:40, 6:20,9:00	LASTIKMAN GP 12:00, 2:25, 4:50, 7:15, 9:40	MANO PO GP 11:40, 2:20, 5:00, 7:40, 10:20

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7:20, 10:00
GP

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"'THE RING' RAISES SOME SERIOUS GOOSE BUMPS."
DAVID ANSEN, NEWSWEEK

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ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7

Ali 1	SPIRIT WARRIORS
Ali 2	AGIMAT NI LOLO
Ali 3	MANO PO
Ali 4	LASTIKMAN
Ali 5	DEKADA '70
Ali 6	ALAMAT NG LAWIN
Ali 7	HOME ALONE DA RIBER

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Farmers 1	LASTIKMAN
Farmers 2	AGIMAT NI LOLO

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JAN 13 & 15	NCA 7 COCK DERBY
JAN 21, 22, & 24	WORLD SLASHER CUP 2003

ELEPHANT WORLD

JAN. 9	3 PM / 5 PM
JAN. 10	10 AM / 3 PM / 5 PM
JAN 11	3 PM / 5 PM

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA

EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	TWO TIMER/ SEX FILES
ODEON	LASTIKMAN
ODEON-2	PROSTI/ HIYAS NG PARAISO
ROBEN	SPIRIT WARRIORS
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	KILABOT AT KEMBOT/ RED DIARY

QUEZON CITY

ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET-2	SPIRIT WARRIORS 2
QUEZON-1	LASTIKMAN
REMAR	LASTIKMAN
REMAR-2	AGIMAT

NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA

A	HOME ALONE DA RIBER
B	HULA MO, HULI KO
C	

MANDALUYONG CITY

SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	DIE ANOTHER DAY
CINEMA-2	REPLI-KATE

CAINTA RIZAL

STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	HULA MO, HULI KO
CINEMA-2	HOME ALONG DA RIBER
CINEMA-3	ALAMAT NG LAWIN
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	LASTIKMAN
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	AGIMAT NI LOLO
CINEMA-6	MANO PO
CINEMA-7	SPIRIT WARRIOR 2
CINEMA-8	LAPU LAPU
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	LASTIKMAN
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	MANO PO
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	AGIMAT NI LOLO
CINEMA-12	SPIRIT WARRIOR 2
CINEMA-14	HOME ALONG DA RIBER
CINEMA-15	DEKADA 70

LORES

CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT

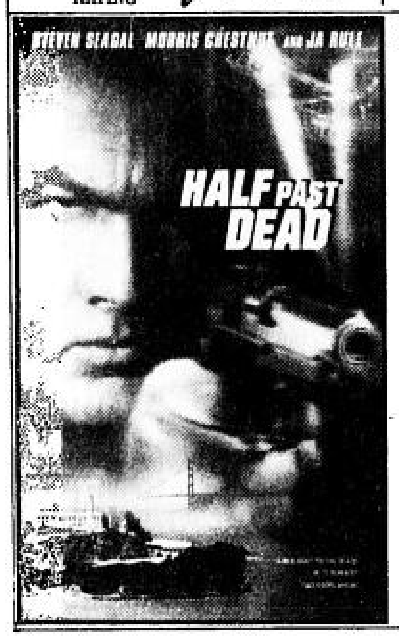
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN

CINEMA 1	DIE ANOTHER DAY
CINEMA 2	BAHID
CINEMA 3	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA 4	CHANGING LNES

UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL

(PARAÑAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

MTRCB RATING ▸ PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult


STEVEN SEAGAL MORRIS CHESTNUT AND JA RULE
HALF PAST DEAD

Special New Year Presentation!
Steven Seagal back in Action

International action superstar Steven Seagal is back with a vengeance. This time he plays undercover FBI agent Sascha Petrosevitch in the brand-new non-stop, slam-bang action blockbuster from Columbia Pictures, "Half Past Dead."

The California Penal Authority has reopened Alcatraz, the most notorious prison in history. A disgruntled prison bureaucrat-turned-criminal mastermind heads a renegade commando team to infiltrate the high-tech fortress in order to force a death-row inmate to reveal the whereabouts of $200 million worth of gold.

Seagal teams with rap artist Ja Rule to rally the Alcatraz inmates to stop the invaders – before they murder the Supreme Court Justice, who is in The Rock to witness an execution.

The fast-paced, action-packed thriller also stars sexy Filipino Hollywood actress Nia Peeples as a deadly gun-firing, knife-throwing martial artist.

OPENS JANUARY 11

THE LORD OF THE RINGS THE TWO TOWERS

2 DAYS TO GO
HURRY! BUY YOUR TICKETS IN ADVANCE NOW at the Glorietta 4, Greenbelt 3 & Alabang Town Center Ticketbooth!
MTRCB Rating: General Patronage (G)
Aragorn
A brave warrior who joins and defends the Fellowship.
AYALA CINEMAS

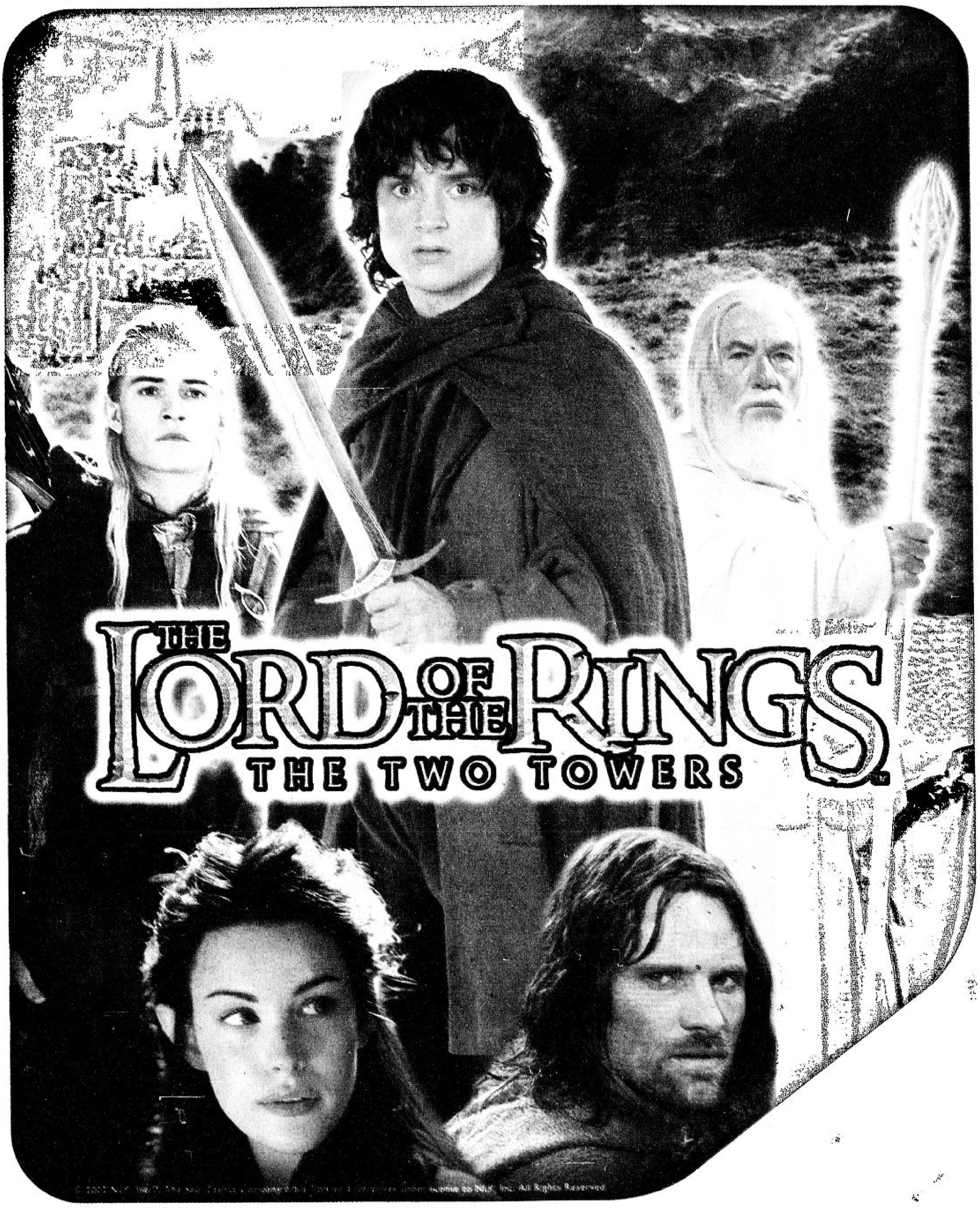
A NEW POWER IS RISING.

Onstage
GREENBELT
THE PERFECT 850 SEAT VENUE FOR ALL TYPES OF LIVE PRESENTATION & ENTERTAINMENT WILL BE RAISING ITS CURTAINS FROM JAN. 11 - 14 TO SCREEN THE MUCH AWAITED MOVIE OF THE YEAR.
THE LORD OF THE RINGS THE TWO TOWERS
SCREENING SCHEDULES:
10:45, 2:15, 5:45, 9:15
FREE SEATING
Ticket Price: P100
MTRCB Rating: General Patronage (G)
AYALA CINEMAS

THE LORD OF THE RINGS THE TWO TOWERS
ADVANCE MIDNIGHT SCREENING
GLORIETTA 4
GREENBELT 3
ALABANG TOWN CENTER
JANUARY 11 - 12:01 AM.
Hurry! Buy your tickets now!
MTRCB Rating: General Patronage
AYALA CINEMAS

Simply a power-packed sequel

THE
SMART
Cinema Club


THE LORD OF THE RINGS
THE TWO TOWERS

SMART Cinema Club members can play any of the Lord of the Rings games for a chance to win Nokia 3530's daily, Nokia 6100's weekly, or ₱500,000 in cash!

SMART
Simply Amazing!

Key in LOTR and send to 239.

Adventure Game

Experience Lord of the Rings action first hand as a member of the fellowship! We'll send you the scenario and you can choose an action by keying in 1 or 2.
Key in **PLAY FELLOW** and send to 239.

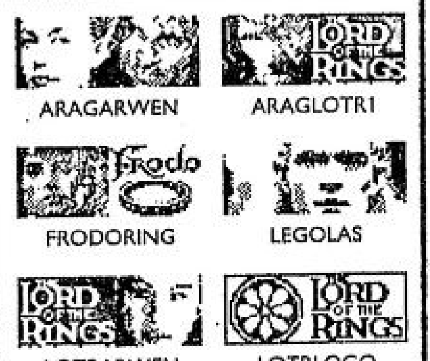
Trivia Game

Think you know everything there is to know about the movie? Try our trivia game and prove yourself.
Key in **PLAY LOTR** and send to 239.

LOGOS

ARAGEYES	ARWENEYES
FRODOEYES	FRODONAME
GANDALFEYES	LEGOLASAXN
LOTRTITLE	NAMEARAGORN
NAMEARWEN	NAMELEGOLAS

PICTURE MESSAGES



ARAGARWEN	ARAGLOTR1
FRODORING	LEGOLAS
LOTRARWEN	LOTRLOGO
LOTRRING	RINGSYMBOL

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Group Graphics*	**GROUP LOTR**
Picture Messages*	**PIC LOTR**
Screen Savers*	**SAVER LOTR**

Send all keywords to 239.

*Available for Nokia handsets only.
To get a list of images available for Ericsson and Siemens handsets, key in LOTR and send to 239.

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BUSINESS

Editor Raul O. Marcelo ● Assistant Editor Corrie S. Narisma

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BIR to lift tax exemption of professionals

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance has ordered the Bureau of Internal Revenue to issue three new regulations that would lift the exemption of three sectors from the value-added and excise taxes and increase the governmen's collection by about P10 billion a year.

The move was in line with an ongoing program starting late 2002 to review all tax exemptions granted by the internal revenue agency.

Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho said the BIR was set to lift the exemption of professionals and financial institutions from the 10-percent VAT as well as the exemption of airline companies from paying the 3-percent excise tax on their jet fuel importation.

Camacho said collecting the VAT from professionals would give the government about P8.6 billion while the excise taxes on jet fuel would generate about P1 billion a year. The VAT on banks and other financial institutions should be revenue neutral, he noted.

Professionals like lawyers, doctors, actors, athletes and the likes together with banks have been exempted from the 10-percent VAT since the comprehensive tax law was passed in 1997.

A proposal to extend their exemption had not been passed by Congress. Camacho said he would ask President Macapagal-Arroyo to veto the provision on the exemption of professionals because this had been a substantial foregone revenue for the government.

The finance chief said he would have preferred that banks continued paying the 5-percent gross receipts tax because this was a final form of impost and was easier to implement.

"But choosing between continuing to lose P8.6 billion from professionals and dealing with the hassle of imposing VAT on banks, I would chose the latter," Camacho said.

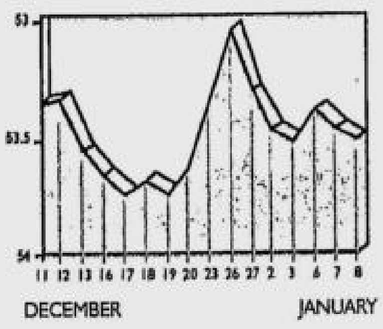
The finance chief said the BIR would soon revoke a 1999 exemption to airline companies importing jet fuel.

Camacho said the exemption from excise tax of jet fuel importers was issued because there was a shortage in aviation fuel production three years ago.

"The basis of the exemption was a lack in availability of the jet fuel locally. But now I think we have ample production and we are just waiting for a Department of Energy certification assuring stable supply before we lift the exemption," he said.

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 53.51 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Jan. 8, 2003

¥ 120.14 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Jan. 8, 2003

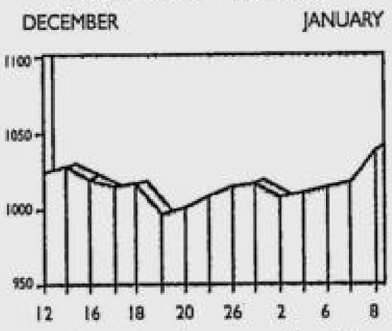
GOLD: $347.25 / 347.75

per ounce Hong Kong, Jan. 8, 2003

STOCK MARKET

Stocks end up

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

STOCKS stocks, led by property sector leader Ayala Land, climbed for the fourth straight day to end up 2.04 percent yesterday, driven by prospects of steady interest rates in the near term, analysts said.

"There were follow-through buying on property stocks because of one important factor—interest rates. The benchmark 91-day T-bill rate dropped this week and the government assured interest rates will remain steady on the low end at least in the first quarter," said AB Capital economic analyst Jose Vistan.

The main index closed up 20.83 points at 1,040.42, the highest closing level in five weeks since Dec. 3, 2002.

Value turnover improved to P329.43 million from Tuesday's P316.2 million. Gainers outclassed losers 25 to nine and there were 29 stocks unchanged.

Index heavyweight Ayala Land, the country's largest property firm, rose 5.43 percent or 25 centavos to end at P4.85.

STOCKS/ B2

Vehicle sales surge 11.6%; Toyota takes lead

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE LOCAL automotive industry chalked up better-than-expected results in 2002 with sales surging 11.6 percent on the back of robust demand for the Philippines prime export bet—Asian utility vehicles.

Aside from surpassing executives' forecast of flat sales in 2002, the past year also saw the return to dominance of Toyota Motor Philippines Corp., which controlled overall sales and the main categories—passenger cars, commercial vehicles and AUVs.

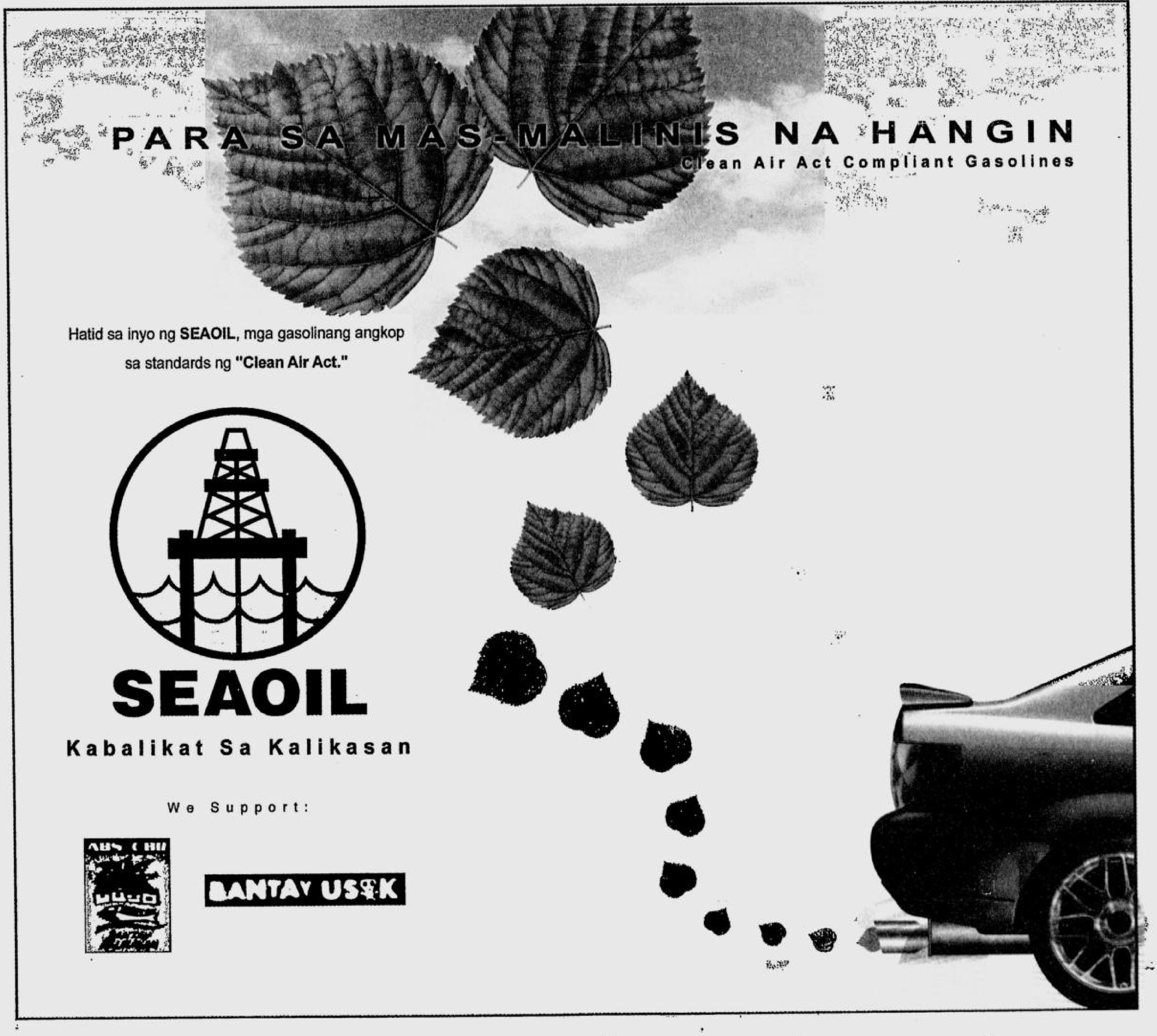
Campi reported that total sales hit 85,587 units last year from 76,670 units in 2001. Commercial vehicle sales rose 20.5 percent to 63,859 units in 2002 from 52,986 units the previous year. This more than compensated for the dismal outing of passenger cars, which slumped 8.3 percent to 21,728 units in 2002 from 23,648 units in 2001.

Amid healthy sales last year, industry executives were divided on this year's outlook for the industry. Chamber of Automotive Manufacturer of the Philippines Inc. (Campi) director Mario de Grano expected sales to remain flat this year while Honda Cars Philippines Inc. president Mitsunari Takano expressed optimism that the industry was well on its way to achieving full recovery.

Takano said the government's plan to change the industry's tariff structure—that would shift the tax base from engine size to sticker price—and the introduction of new models and more variants should sustain consumer demand for new automobiles.

VEHICLE/ B3

2003
AUTO SALES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Investment company files case vs Benpres, Bayantel in New York

By Doris C. Dumlao

HONG KONG-BASED Asian Infrastructure Fund has sued the Lopezes' Benpres Holdings Corp. and Bayan Telecommunications Holdings Corp. in New York over the alleged nondisclosure of information pertinent to Benpres' investments in the bleeding telecom unit.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, Benpres said AIF, a unit of the American Investment Group, filed on Dec. 19 a civil suit for damages alleging violations of the US Federal securities law and New York state laws.

AIF also sued certain officers and directors of Benpres and Bayantel with the US Federal trial court in New York City.

"The complaint alleges that the defendants, including the placement agent in the sale of the convertible preferred shares of Bayantel, failed to disclose to AIG at the time it purchased such shares that certain institutional investors of Bayantel had pre-existing put rights to Benpres of their common shares in Bayantel," the disclosure said.

AIF purchased convertible preferred shares of Bayantel in 1998, which are guaranteed by Benpres and due to mature on Jan. 16 this year with a maturity value of $44.8 million.

But Benpres said this case would not affect its current negotiations to restructure close to $600 million in debts to various creditors.

"Benpres intends to continue discussions with creditors on its balance sheet management plan for the settlement of all its direct and indirect obligations," the disclosure said.

AIF had served in October a notice that it would exercise its option to require Benpres to acquire its class "A" shares in Bayantel. AIF was also claiming a higher number of shares and at a price higher than the amount recognized by Benpres in its annual accounts for 2001.

Since neither Bayantel nor Benpres is in a position to redeem the shares at this point in time, the Lopez group wants to restructure the obligations to AIF.

However, there were additional equity infusions from various shareholders after 1995 and AIF wanted Benpres to also redeem the additional shares. Benpres, for its part, is recognizing only AIF's original 6.3-percent stake in Bayantel as eligible for the put option.

When AIF first invested in Bayantel, it thought the telecom firm would go public that would allow the investor an exit mechanism. But Bayantel, which was saddled with about $477 million in debts, was badly hit by the peso freefall arising from the Asian currency turmoil in 1997.

In lieu of the exit mechanism through an initial public offering, AIF can press Benpres to redeem its shares.

AIF is a $1.08-billion fund established in 1994 to invest in infrastructure and related industries in Asia.

The Philippines accounts for the biggest share of its investment exposure amounting to $175.9 million or 28.8 percent of the total.

Liberty Telecoms obtains debt reprieve

PUBLICLY listed Liberty Telecoms Holdings Inc. (LIB) and subsidiary Liberty Broadcasting Network Inc. have signed a debt restructuring deal with state-owned Development Bank of the Philippines involving P300 million in liabilities.

The amount represents about 63 percent of LIB's total current debts as of September last year worth P471.8 million.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, LIB corporate secretary Heinz Reyes said the deal, which was signed last Dec. 27, had stretched out the payment of P175.04 million worth of loans of the two companies over five years ending Aug. 14, 2007.

The payment of principal will commence on Feb. 14, 2005 while payment of interest payments will resume this May.

A portion of the debts worth P94.95 million was made payable over a period of almost six years until March 31, 2008, with payment on principal commencing on March 31, 2005 and interest payments on May 31 this year.

"For both loans, this (restructuring deal) means a two-year extension of the original loan terms on principal payment," the disclosure said.

Accrued interests and charges amounting to P26.22 million will be payable in six quarterly installments commencing on Aug. 15 this year.

Doris C. Dumlao

GOINGS-ON

Electronic tax filing

TO FURTHER enhance efficiency gains from EFPS, an Internet-based system for corporate tax filing and payments, the Bureau of Internal Revenue will require big taxpayers to file their tax returns electronically as early as four days before payment deadline.

Payments, however, can be made on the deadline also through electronic banking system of EFPS-accredited banks, which is possible only if a bank's system is capable of warehousing of filing information.

Security Bank's EFPS RealTime, an advanced EFPS-accredited Internet-based electronic tax payments system introduced last year, is the first of such systems to fully comply with this requirement. The system is capable of data warehousing and handling staggered filing.

Security Bank's EFPS RealTime was launched in October last year. It also features advanced workflow management, automatic transaction alerts via SMS, multiple account enrollment for funding tax payments, and secured Internet connectivity. Interested parties may contact NM Amparo at 891-1388 or Vince Mangawang at 888-7245.

EWBC, Smart promo

EAST West Banking Corp. (EWBC) said it was extending the deadline for its "Get Access, Get Smart" promo to Jan. 31, 2003.

EWBC tied up with Smart Communications Inc. last year for a promo that offers superior phone models for free to qualified EWBC depositors. The promo aims to generate enrollment to Mobile Access, EWBC's phone banking facility that enables clients to do banking transactions using their Smart GSM mobile phones via the Short Messaging System (SMS).

MobileAccess is one of the innovative and customer-focused financial services from EWBC designed to give clients different and more efficient access to their bank and their bank accounts. It forms part of the bank's thrust to develop services anchored on strong telecommunications and information technology (IT) systems. "Modern-day banking that employs available technology today, such as the Internet and the mobile phone, will give our clients the ultimate convenience and choice of when, where and how to conduct their business with us," the bank said in a statement.

CAVITE Export Processing Zone

Peza expects growth in ecozone investments

By Abigail L. Ho

THE PHILIPPINE Economic Zone Authority (Peza) is optimistic that investments in the country's export processing and economic zones will increase this year after suffering a 23-percent decline last year.

In a roundtable discussion during the launch of the Center for Servant Leadership Philippines yesterday, Peza director general Lilia de Lima said 2002 was, in general, a difficult year as reflected in the decline in investments in the economic zones.

"But we hope it will be better this year. We had some visitors last year who'll hopefully come back and invest this year," de Lima said.

She disclosed that some Japanese and American manufacturing firms had already expressed interest in setting up shops in some of the country's economic zones.

Peza recorded a high of P80.8 billion in investments in 2001 but the amount went down 23 percent in 2002 because of the weak global economy.

Despite the decline in locator investments, de Lima noted that ecozones under Peza posted a 16.4-percent surge in employment generation and a 15-percent growth in merchandise exports.

"I hope we have better prospects this year," she said.

Employment numbers were placed at 716,990 as of end-2001 while merchandise exports totaled almost $19.5 billion in the same year.

She noted that information technology, tourism and manufacturing would be this year's key growth drivers.

In the seven-year period from 1995-2001, electronic parts and products accounted for 64.3 percent of total locator investments.

BOI to require big registered firms to list

By Elena R. Torrijos

THE BOARD of Investments said it would require large companies under its wing to go public and help prop up a stagnant local bourse.

SEC Chair Lilia Bautista said BOI Managing Head Gregorio Domingo gave this assurance recently.

"He said, we do not think we can require all (BOI-registered companies) to go public, maybe we can focus on the big ones. He did not mention any benchmark (regarding size)," Bautista said.

Under the law creating the BOI, companies registered with the investment agency should offer at least 10 percent of their shares to the public.

Instead of strictly enforcing this requirement, the BOI has exempted registered companies from the law provided that at least 20 of their employees own shares of the company.

Bautista said there were a number of good export companies and subsidiaries of big foreign firms that were qualified to list.

Bautista cited the dearth of listed issues as one of the reasons for the country's stagnant stock market.

The country has around 310 listed firms, of which only some are actively traded.

Last year, only five companies listed at the Philippine Stock Exchange. These were: Banco de Oro Universal Bank and Highlands Prime Inc., both controlled by retail magnate Henry Sy Sr.; Salcon Power Corp., Citystate Savings Bank and Jollyville Holdings Corp.

Asia seen leading world expansion this year

HONG KONG—Asia is set to lead world growth this year despite risks to the regional and global economies from a possible war in the Middle East, terrorist attacks and Japan's weakness, a senior IMF official said yesterday.

The International Monetary Fund has estimated global economic growth this year of 3.7 percent, up from the forecast for last year of 2.8 percent. However, growth in most Asian economies should be higher than the global estimate, IMF external relations director Thomas Dawson said at a Foreign Correspondent's Club lunch here.

"Asia weathered the global slowdown better than other regions, and our expectation is that this year as well, growth in most of the Asian countries will be above the global average," Dawson said.

The IMF expects Asian industrialized economies, apart from Japan, to grow between 3.5 percent and six percent this year. The growth of the larger Southeast Asian economies is expected to average 4 percent.

"There does seem to be a bit of a disconnect in that the numbers seem to be better than what the attitude seems to be in the region and I'm a little bit curious about that," he said.

Contrary to popular perceptions, China's trade gains have not been at the expense of Southeast Asia's emerging economies, he said.

"Instead, China and the Asean-4 (Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines) have together displaced the Asian industrialized countries in sectors—such as apparel, footwear and household products—that these more advanced economies were relinquishing.

"This is a healthy, rather than disturbing development."

Dawson conceded that recent data suggest the global recovery is tepid and "downside risks appear to predominate."

"One concern is that the geopolitical situation will at some point force oil prices to catastrophic heights." Oil prices have already risen sharply as the United States moves closer to a possible war against Iraq and the IMF estimates that every five dollar sustained rise in oil prices would cut 0.3 percentage points off global growth after about six months.

Another terrorist attack—similar to October's Bali bombing—would directly impact on industries such as tourism and lead to higher security costs. It would also weigh on investment decisions across many sectors, Dawson said.

AFP

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Wednesday, January 8, 2003)

BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	17.75	17.75	17.75	17.75	13,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	35	36	35	36	1,080,800
Citystate Savings Bank	14.75	14.75	14.75	14.75	2,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	27.5	29	27.5	28.5	865,400
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	31	31	30.5	31	67,900
Philippine National Bank	23.5	24	23.5	24	1,800
Phil. Savings Bank	28.5	28.5	28.5	28.5	10,000
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Filipino Fund Inc.	0.33	0.35	0.33	0.35	21,080,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1220	1220	1220	1220	420
Sun Life Financial Serv.	930	945	930	940	3,380
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	13.25	13.25	11.75	11.75	80,600
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	210,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	455	470	455	470	1,160
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.025	0.027	0.025	0.027	11,000,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	1,500,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	295	300	292.5	297.5	121,330
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.011	0.01	0.011	2,400,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	8.5	8.6	8.4	8.4	971,000
Manila Electric Co. B	9.9	10.5	9.9	10.5	1,873,000
Petron Corp.	1.54	1.54	1.54	1.54	1,198,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	100,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.4	2.42	2.4	2.42	590,000
Negros Navigation Co. Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	100,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	17,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	17	17	16.5	16.5	46,200
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	35	35	35	35	63,400
RFM Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	150,000
San Miguel Corp. A	59	59	58.5	59	45,600
San Miguel Corp. B	65	66	65	65.5	367,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	4.35	4.45	4.35	4.4	3,528,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.34	2.34	2.34	2.34	1,365,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.135	0.14	0.135	0.14	2,540,000
First Phil Hldgs. Corp.	9	9.3	9	9.3	513,000
Ionics Inc.	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	30,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	1,714,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.56	0.58	0.56	0.57	2,650,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	10,430,000
Philtread Holdings Corp.	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	165,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	300,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.026	0.027	0.026	0.027	1,400,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Interphil Labs Inc. A	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	5,000
Interphil Labs Inc. B	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	41,000
Matsushita Elec Phil Corp.	9	9	9	9	1,000
Pryce Corp.	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	2,000,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	11.75	12.25	11.75	12	209,400
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	400,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	13	13	11.5	11.75	589,200
Jollibee Warrants	15.75	15.75	15.75	15.75	500
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10	10	10	10	1,000
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	8	8	8	8	2,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	4.75	4.9	4.75	4.85	16,851,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	250,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	0.9	0.92	0.9	0.9	2,510,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	4.8	5	4.8	5	5,679,000
MINING					
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.21	0.215	0.21	0.215	7,580,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	250,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.0026	0.0028	0.0026	0.0028	14,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	4,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	100,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.31	0.31	0.3	0.3	1,200,000
OIL					
Interport Res. B	0.0014	0.0014	0.0014	0.0014	6,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0022	0.0022	0.0022	0.0022	34,000,000

DISCLOSURES

THE ANNUAL stockholders meeting of **Central Azucarera De Tarlac** will be held on Jan. 28, 11 a.m., at the Alto Pavilion, San Miguel, Tarlac City.

* * *

LUIS Lorenzo Jr. resigned as director of **Belle Corp.** due to his appointment to the Department of Agriculture.

* * *

THE PHILIPPINE Stock Exchange Inc.approved on Jan. 7 the application of **Queenbee Resources Corp.** to list additional 3,246,554 covered warrants, to cover the distribution of one additional warrant for every five warrants held to all warrantholders of record as of Dec. 13. The listing is set for Jan. 10.

* * *

THE ANNUAL stockholders meeting of **Bogo-Medellin Milling Co. Inc.** was postponed for lack of quorum.

* * *

SM Prime Holdings bought 2.1 million treasury shares, at prices ranging from P4.65 to P4.80 per share, on Jan. 7.

* * *

LA TONDEÑA Distillers Inc. bought 20,000 LTDI shares on Jan. 7 in line with its repurchase program. ***Compiled by Armin Adina, PDI Research***

CURRENCIES

Jan. 8, 2003

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	0.959877	1.000000	53.452000
Japan	Yen	0.007971	0.008304	0.443900
United Kingdom	Pound	1.540123	1.604500	85.763700
Hongkong	Dollar	0.123074	0.128218	6.853500
Switzerland	Franc	0.685969	0.714643	38.199100
Canada	Dollar	0.614203	0.639877	34.202700
Singapore	Dollar	0.550105	0.573099	30.633300
Australia	Dollar	0.552130	0.575209	30.746100
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.546160	2.652590	141.786200
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.255961	0.266660	14.253500
Brunei	Dollar	0.551210	0.574251	30.694900
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000108	0.000112	0.006000
Thailand	Baht	0.022422	0.023359	1.248600
UAE	Dirham	0.261354	0.272279	14.553900
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.041800	55.686300
Argentina	Peso	0.293540	0.305810	16.346200
Brazil	REAL	0.288859	0.300933	16.085500
Denmark	Kroner	0.134618	0.140245	7.496400
India	Rupee	0.020039	0.020877	1.115900
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.252633	0.263193	14.068200
Mexico	New Peso	0.092741	0.096618	5.164400
New Zealand	Dollar	0.510356	0.531689	28.419800
Norway	Kroner	0.138418	0.144204	7.708000
Pakistan	Rupee	0.016546	0.017238	0.921400
South Africa	Rand	0.112162	0.116850	6.245900
Korea	Won	0.000813	0.000847	0.045300
Sweden	Kroner	0.110115	0.114718	6.131900
Syria	Pound	0.018638	0.019417	1.037900
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.027863	0.029028	1.551600
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000666	0.000694	0.037100

Stocks end up

From page B1

Mall developer SM Prime Holdings Inc. gained 5.26 percent or 25 centavos at P5.

National Treasurer Sergio Edeza said on Monday that T-bill rates were likely to remain low in the first quarter due to a highly liquid debt market.

The average rate of the benchmark 90-day paper, which commercial banks use to set their own lending rates, eased to 5.121 percent from 5.164 percent previously at the government's auction on Monday.

Analysts said market sentiment also got a boost from a global bond issue planned by the government to finance the country's bulging budget deficit which has been greeted by strong investor interest.

"The market is also excited over the first global bond deal for the year which should help finance this year's deficit," Vistan said.

The Philippines is likely to issue as early as yesterday at least $750 million worth of dollar-denominated 10-year bonds.

The government sees 2003 budget shortfall at around P202 billion or 4.7 percent of gross domestic product this year.

Officials have said they expect the 2002 budget deficit to have hit around P210 billion.

Vistan said the market was likely to trade sideways with a positive bias in the coming sessions in the range of 1,010 to 1,050. *Reuters*

Acer lifts Subic exports past $1-B mark

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

EXPORTS from the Subic Freeport Zone climbed 21 percent last year as shipments of Taiwan computer giant Acer surpassed the $1-billion mark.

Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) Chair Felicito C. Payumo reported that exports hit $1.3 billion last year from $1.08 billion in 2001. Payumo said the SBMA relaxed its export documentation procedures last year to cope with the locators' adoption of just-in-time inventory.

Subic's export growth was more than double the estimated 9 percent growth of national exports last year.

The bulk of the Subic exports was accounted for by Acer's Subic subsidiary, Wistron Infocomm (Philippines) Corp., which generated $1.057 billion worth of exports last year, up 35 percent from 2001. Subic is Acer's biggest factory outside of Taiwan.

Acer, which has been operating in Subic since 1995, manufactures motherboards and notebook computers for Acer and other computer giants like IBM and Hitachi.

Payumo said Acer had stepped up its production in Subic last year to meet $1.2 billion worth of contracts following a rebound in demand for electronic products after the Sept. 11 attacks in 2001. He noted that Acer had closed down some of its plants in Europe, Taiwan and the United States and shifted these operations to the Philippines because of significant savings in production.

He said Acer had taken note of the labor pool in Olongapo, Bataan and Zambales which the computer giant could tap whenever it needed to step up production to meet a deluge of orders.

Other top exporters in Subic were Sanyo Denki ($40 million), Omron Mechatronic ($19.4 million), Juken Sangyo ($18 million), and Taiwan Hitachi ($11 million).

PNOC subsidiary gets $90-M syndicated loan

THE STATE-OWNED Philippine National Oil Co. (PNOC) is borrowing $90 million through a syndicate of foreign banks led by Barclays.

Barclays Capital, BDO Capital and Investment Corp., the Bank of Nova Scotia Asia Ltd., BNP Paribas and ING Bank NV arranged the multi-tranche loan to PNOC Energy Development Corp., the banks said in a joint statement issued yesterday.

PNOC Energy Development will use the loan to partially finance its foreign exchange requirements this year, the statement said.

The debt facility is guaranteed by the Philippine government, the banks said, adding that the syndication attracted strong local and foreign attention and was oversubscribed. *AFP*

Vehicle sales surge . . .

From page B1

The biggest performer last year were AUVs as 37,377 units were sold in 2002, up 38.7 percent from 26,939 units in 2001. AUVs, a Philippine-designed vehicle which combines the comfort and styling of a sedan and cargo and durability of a pickup truck, accounted for 44 percent of the total market.

Toyota's AUV, the Tamaraw Revo, was the single biggest model in the market with 12,326 units sold in 2002. This propelled Toyota to achieve a rare "Triple Crown"—No. 1 in passenger cars (41.4-percent share), No. 1 in commercial vehicles (24.7 percent) and No. 1 in total industry sales (28.9 percent).

Toyota attributed its strong performance to its efforts to make its vehicles more affordable with its various auto loan packages, generous cash rebates and financing deals.

Mitsubishi Motors Philippines Corp. was No. 2 overall with sales of 16,282 units or 19 percent market share.

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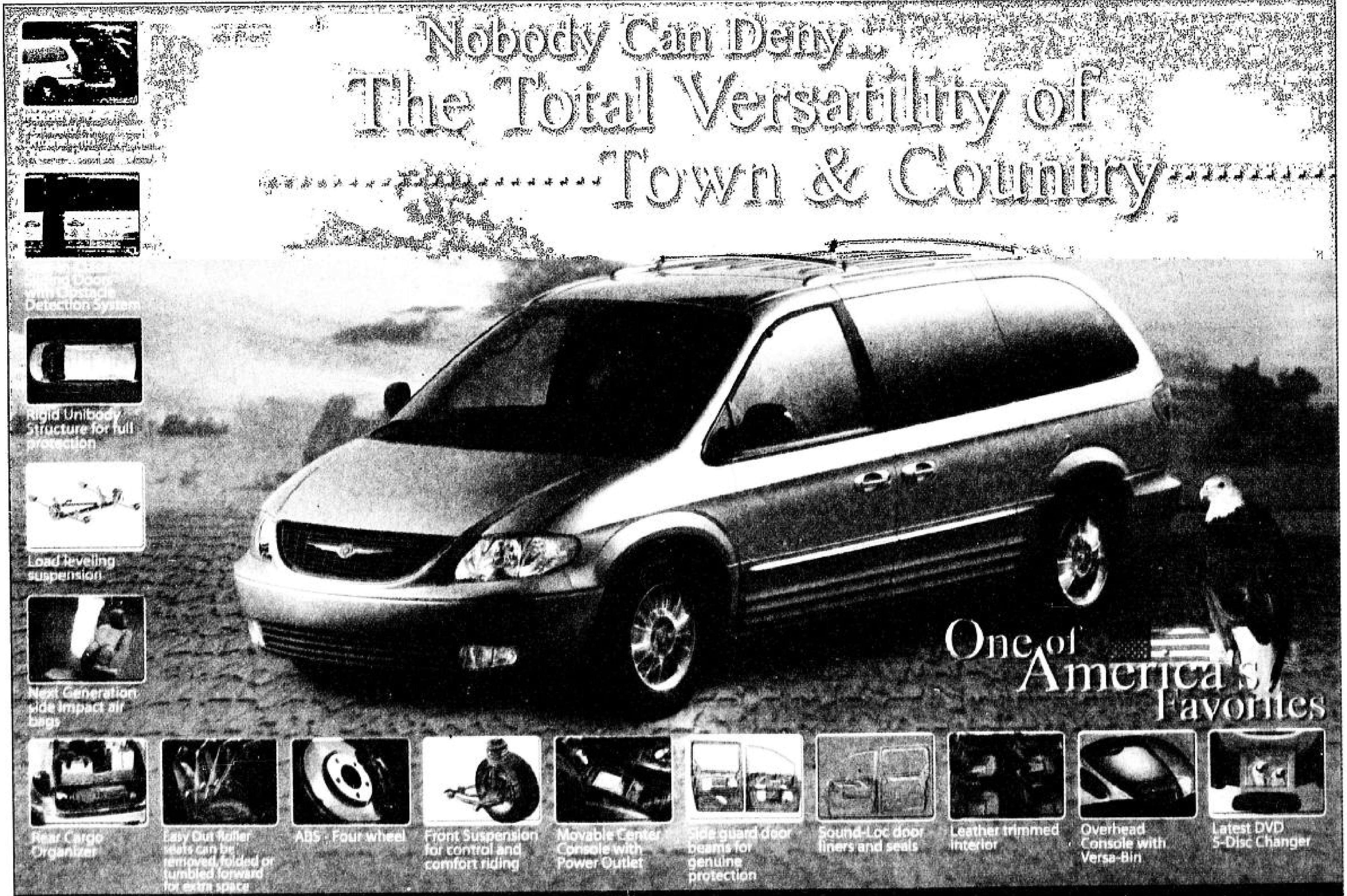
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Overstated data seen raising borrowing costs

By Clarissa S. Batino

CONCERNS that the Philippines may have embellished the state of its economy by understating imports may jack up the government's borrowing costs by at least 40 basis points, a government source said yesterday.

Earlier this week, the government was expecting to sell as much as $750 million worth of 10-year bonds—a key plank in shoring up the country's worsening finances—but after admitting its trade surplus had been inflated in recent years, foreign investors looked to be shying away from the deal.

Persons familiar with the matter said the coupon rate of the global bonds to be sold soon would be about 9.5 percent compared to 9.125 percent in November.

The size of the bond issue may also be reduced to $500 million because of the higher costs, they added.

"The coupon rate will likely be at 9.5 percent because the spreads have been widening, partly due to the negative news on the country's trade balance," a government source said.

"They've downgraded their expectations to about $500 million," said an industry source who declined to be named. "The deadline is today. It has affected the yield, but the volume they will be able to raise is at least $500 million. Right now, the committed orders are about $600 million."

International ratings agency Moody's Investors Service said earlier this week the Philippines had been underreporting imports of electronic components through tax-free zones.

Electronics account for about half of overall exports, with many of the imported components assembled into semiconductors and computer parts in 58 export processing zones.

Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho said he did not expect Moody's or any other ratings firms to penalize the country's sovereign credit score, stressing that the reports of statistical embellishments had been "blown out of proportion."

"We could not help but feel that there is some malice on the reports that came out in the foreign papers. As we have said, this problem is being addressed by a team for a year already and is nearing conclusion. The manner and the timing of the article were somewhat suspicious," Camacho said.

Opinions were mixed as to whether the revelation would damage the country's credit ratings, which could make future debt more expensive for the cash-strapped country.

"The elimination of the current account surplus is a significantly negative factor in the country's sovereign risk profile, in our view, and may result in a rating downgrade," UBS Warburg said in a research report.

But others, including a senior Standard and Poor's official, said the announcement would not prompt any downgrades.

"There won't be any immediate impact. But I think it would impact negatively on the credibility of the government," said S&P's Asia-Pacific director Takahira Ogawa.

Government officials also said corrections in the trade data would not affect the country's sovereign ratings, backing comments made by a Moody's Investors Service analyst in an article in the Asian Wall Street Journal on Tuesday.

"It looks like there will be some upward adjustment in imports, but the overall BOP position is not going to change," Bangko Sentral Deputy Governor Amando Tetangco told reporters.

Some ratings analysts previously cited the surplus in the current account, which makes up part of the overall balance of payments, as a key support of the foreign currency debt ratings.

The Philippines, which rattled investors and analysts with three budget deficit blowouts last year, is rated BB-plus by S&P and Ba1 by Moody's. *With a report from Reuters*

Agri officials back more rice imports this year

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE BUREAU of Agricultural Statistics has recommended an increase in rice imports this year to 906,000 tons to reflect a possible drop in local output in the first six months of the year.

The previous estimate had been for imports of 800,000 tons to meet demand for the staple.

The Department of Agriculture is pursuing a higher rice production target of 14.3 million metric tons this year, nearly 8 percent higher than last year's 13.27 million metric tons.

Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo told reporters the bureau, which determines the level of imports, estimated unmilled rice output would slip by 1.3 percent to 5.6 million tons in the first six months of 2003 due to the El Niño weather pattern.

El Niño is a disruption of the ocean-atmosphere system that normally brings prolonged drought to an affected area.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration has said the El Niño weather disturbance peaked in December, and its effects are seen easing this year.

Lorenzo said, however, that the government must review the recommendation as it planned to intensify the distribution of higher-yielding seeds to farmers this year.

"We will review in June whether we need to import more," Lorenzo said.

"We have less rainfall, but we are pushing for better agriculture systems to have higher yields," Lorenzo told reporters.

The Philippines, one of Asia's largest rice importers, bought a total of 1.14 million tons in 2002.

Lorenzo said unmilled rice output hit a record 13.27 million tons last year, exceeding the government's initial estimate of 13.11 million.

Unmilled rice output in 2002 was up 2.4 percent from the previous year.

Lorenzo attributed the increase in harvest partly to the distribution by the government of higher-yielding seeds to farmers and rehabilitation of irrigation facilities last year.

The country's average rice yield increased to 3.28 tons per hectare last year from 3.19 tons in 2001, he said. *With a report from Reuters*

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SOCIETE GENERALE DE SURVEILLANCE recently awarded to wireless applications developer Chikka Asia Inc. the prestigious ISO 9001:2000 certification. SGS Philippines managing director David Robinson (left) awards the certificate to Chikka Asia chief operating officer Chito Bustamante. Chikka Asia is the first certified mobile data services provider in the Philippines. Dubbed the text capital of the world, the Philippines is also fast achieving prominence as a regional center for excellent wireless applications development.

Caltex to help check oil price hikes in Mindanao

By Ronnel W. Domingo

TALKS with local oil giants on addressing high fuel prices in Central Mindanao have led to Caltex (Philippines) Inc. agreeing to lease its pipeline to other firms, the Department of Energy said yesterday

Energy Secretary Vincent Perez Jr. said in a statement Caltex's decision was a step toward relieving consumers of big price adjustments.

Also yesterday, the INQUIRER reported that pump prices in the region went up by at least P1.22 a liter due to the closure of an oil terminal in Parang, Maguindanao.

The increase was 73 centavos more than the earlier announced, industry-wide adjustment of 49 centavos a liter of gasoline, diesel and kerosene.

A petroleum dealer based in Cotabato City was quoted as saying the higher prices were due to fees charged by haulers as the depot's closure also halted the operation of the facility's pipeline that delivered fuel from the cities of Davao and General Santos.

The shutdown was allegedly due to a security threat from an unidentified terrorist group.

"We have called the attention of Caltex (officials) to this and we were informed that the closure of its facilities was due mainly to business reasons," Perez said.

WHEN farmer Nicetas Katigbak started planting coffee in Lipa's biggest coffee plantation, no more Barako seedlings were available. He now has only Robusta coffee in his farm.

MEI MAGSINO/PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Barako coffee brewing no more

By Mei Magsino
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

(First of a series)

LIPA CITY—This city, birthplace of the Philippines' coffee industry, now has no more Barako coffee tree to boast of. Not a single Barako coffee tree stands in the city's coffee plantations.

Even the city's "Coffee Festival," which was supposed to be held on Dec. 11 to 16 last year, was moved to Jan. 17, also the date for the opening salvo of the city fiesta on Jan. 19 and 20.

Instead of a coffee festivity in December, this city held a "Vegetable Industry Livelihood and Marketing Awareness" (Vilma) program, a festival that sought to develop the local vegetable industry.

Ironically, unlike Barako coffee beans, which can last for about 10 years if perfectly dried and stored, vegetables lose their freshness and droop in 24 hours.

And nothing was said of the coffee that brought wealth to a city built on the coffee industry. To think that coffee is the second most traded commodity in the world—second only to petroleum.

Coffee varieties

Apart from the Barako or Liberica variety—the biggest bean with the strongest flavor and aroma—coffee has four other varieties. The second biggest coffee bean with the same flavor is the Exelsa, which is often mistaken for the Barako. The Exelsa has more fruits than the Barako.

A bit smaller than the Exelsa is the Arabica, which is grown in the highlands. The most commercially sought after is the Robusta, smaller than the Arabica but bears more fruits. The smallest variety is the native coffee beans called the Tagalog coffee.

From Batangas to Cavite

In 1985, when the coffee industry was at its peak, coffee used to cost P90 a kilo. Now, the price is down to only P20 or lower. In the United States, a pound of roasted coffee costs $6.

Lipa's and Cavite's climate, high altitude and volcanic soil are very suitable for growing coffee.

As the Barako left its birthplace, the coffee town of Amadeo in Cavite now claims to be the coffee capital of the Philippines.

According to Batangas Gov. Hermilando Mandanas, Batangas is no longer the coffee capital of the Philippines as there are now more coffee trees in Cavite and Mindanao.

Not sentimental

"The Batangueño is not sentimental. He goes to where the money is. When the coffee production declined because of the pest infestation, he went to plant oranges," Mandanas said.

He admitted that he drinks tea, not coffee.

At the Lipa City Hall, actress-turned-mayor Vilma Santos-Recto drinks coffee and actually loves it.

But her executive secretary, Eddie Reyes, says the mayor is not in the position to answer any issue on coffee.

The mayor's office serves instant coffee Blend 45.

According to Lipa City Administrator Levi Dimaunahan, it is now useless to plant coffee as the prices have been too low for any planter to get profits.

Fabulous wealth

Barako coffee—known as the Batangas coffee because of its strong taste and aroma—was first planted in Barangay Pinagtung-Ulan by the Macasaet family in the 1800s.

Lipa's history has it that the country's first coffee tree was a Barako tree (Liberica variety), a cutting from Brazil. Thus, the coffee industry was born and raised in Lipa.

With the town's volcanic soil, climate and elevation, which are the perfect condition to grow coffee, the industry boomed to supply 80 percent of the world's demand for coffee.

With the huge supply and ever-increasing demand all throughout the world, Lipa became the richest city in the country.

On Oct. 21, 1887, Queen Isabela of Spain elevated the then town of Lipa to a city with the name "Villa de Lipa" because of the prosperity resulting from the coffee boom.

1887

The present seal of Lipa bears the number 1887, the year it was named Villa de Lipa, also known as the coat of arms, equivalent to the royal privilege to a seat in the royal audencia of Spain.

It was the golden age of the coffee industry that built the reputation and riches of Villa de Lipa as the Little Intramuros, where the first jewelry store in the country was established, as Lipa at that time used to be the richest town in the Philippines.

Even the late Sen. Claro M. Recto, a native of Tayabas, Quezon, transferred to Lipa because it had the best schools. Recto's mother belonged to the Mayo clan, one of the richest families in Lipa.

According to the old people of Lipa, the wide lands of Batangas used to be coffee plantations.

Diamond lovers

When the coffee harvests were good, several families became fabulously wealthy that they could afford to adorn their socks, collars, bracelets and earrings with diamonds.

Some of the wealthy dons would even throw diamonds to the *"alilas"* (servants).

If anyone wanted to know how much a coffee merchant earned in trading coffee, one would just wait on the gate of the coffee trader's mansion and count the number of horse-driven carriages that came into the house, as all of them contained silver and gold coins of different denominations from the different countries where the master had gone to trade coffee.

The method of counting how much the gold and silver coins earned from the trade was by the bushels. The coins were scattered on the azotea, where the servants would polish them one by one until the crack of dawn.

The morning sun's rays would bounce off the gold and silver coins.

The reflection from the coins would hit the ceilings and walls of the mansions, and the grand houses would glitter like gold. *(To be continued)*

PLDT seen making more 'difficult, unpopular' decisions

By Abigail L. Ho

AFTER letting go of over 500 employees at the start of the year, the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. is set to make more "difficult and unpopular decisions" to maintain its leadership in the telecommunications industry.

In an e-mail to all PLDT employees, company president and chief executive Manuel Pangilinan stressed that times were changing, especially in the fixed-line business, so management had to take the necessary steps to ensure that PLDT would still be able to provide the best service to its 2.1 million landline subscribers.

"As we enter the year 2003, it is expected that the landscape of fixed line telecommunications will continue to change. We cannot stop this: AT&T just announced more layoffs yesterday (3,500 people)," he said. "But it is my commitment to you that PLDT shall move forward, addressing each problem and emerging a stronger company not only for its employees and shareholders, but also for the public it serves and for our country."

"There are no easy solutions if we intend to survive, and to prosper. Difficult and tough decisions will have to be made. Decisions that may hurt, and decisions that may be unpopular. But in the end, the only objective of all decisions which management has and will make is to build a stronger and more competitive PLDT—for the benefit of all our stakeholders, especially our employees," he added.

PLDT retrenched 546 employees, mostly telephone operators, on Jan. 1.

Messages

Our warmest greetings to the Confederation of Garment Exporters of the Philippines (CONGEP) and its supporters and participants as you begin the Source it Trade Fair 2003 at the World Trade Center Metro Manila on 9-11 January 2003.

Source it is the first integrated reverse trade fair for the garments & textile industry towards developing and improving supply-chain links and business solutions regionally. It is an "ASEAN Plus" initiative demonstrating creative resourcefulness brought about by globalization. By putting to work once again the same spirit of unity, cooperation and teamwork among government agencies, industry members and our Asian neighbors, we can achieve a win-win situation that will transition our economies towards harnessing all the benefits of free and fair trade.

The garments and textile sector is a global economic activity affecting all of us. The Source it initiative is an innovation that emphasizes the abundance of opportunities in a global enterprise.

Our sincere congratulations and best wishes to CONGEP, and we look forward to working closely with you and our partners in Asia towards sustaining the viability and competitiveness of the garments and textile industry.

Mabuhay!

MAR ROXAS
Secretary, Department of Trade and Industry

Congratulations to the organizers, supporters and participants of Source it Trade Fair 2003. We wish to assure the supporters and participants of the event that the Philippine Government, through the Garment and Textile Export Board (GTEB), in cooperation with other government agencies, recognizes the need to fully support such an undertaking that would not only rekindle interest in the local textile and apparel industry ; but which would revive the spirit of entrepreneurship in the country as well.

Hopefully, through the Confederation of Garments Exporters of the Philippines (CONGEP), this event would be instrumental in exploring the vast opportunities available to the textile and apparel industry. The event should be able to provide participants and supporters new insights on the inherent strengths of Philippine industries and business in view of the challenges posed by the impending effects of globalization.

To one and all, our best wishes and *Mabuhay!*

SERAFIN N. JULIANO
Executive Director
Garment and Textile Export Board (GTEB

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With your participation and support, it is our fervent hope that Source it Trade Fair 2003 will pave the way for stronger and better business linkages between the textile and industries of the region and the world.

Mabuhay!

GEORGE T. SIY
President,
CONGEP

On behalf of the Philippine Retailers Association (PRA) and Philippine Franchise Association (PFA), I would like to extend our warmest congratulations to the organizers, supporters and participants of the Source it Trade Fair 2003.

The fact that the event is being hold at this time when the textile and apparel industries of the Philippines and Asia, are in the midst of challenges posed by the growing interdependence of an increasingly globalized world economy, speaks well of the pioneering efforts and initiative of the Confederation of Garment Exporters of the Philippine (CONGEP) in recognizing the need to forge linkages between suppliers, manufacturers,

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Your dedication and commitment in fostering the best linkages between the textile and apparel industries of the regional and the rest of the world, augur well for the success of not only the first Source it Trade Fair, but for future ones yet to come.

SAMIE LIM
Chairman Emeritus, PRA

MANNY M. SIGGAOAT
Chairman, PRA

MA. ALEGRIA SIBAL-LIMJOCO
President
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May the event pave the way for better and stronger linkages among the textile and apparel industries in the Asian region and the rest of the world.

Again, congratulations and *Mabuhay!*

CLARO C. ARRIOLA
President
Textile Mills Association of the Philippines
(TMAP)

SOURCE It 2003

(An Integrated Clothing –Textile Sourcing Fair)

9-11 January 2003

World Trade Center Metro Manila, Philippines

BACKGROUND

"*Source It*" aims to further consolidate and expand intra-ASEAN and extra-ASEAN regional linkages for mutual trade benefits to strengthen the growth and competitiveness base of the Apparel and Textile Industry in the region.

With the Philippines being the Chairman-Country of the ASEAN Federation of the Textile Industries (AFTEX), the event aims to further support ASEAN-ASIAN closer economic trade and business relations, highlighting the potentials of ASEAN as a market and its commitment towards regional integration and economic liberalization. A plenary session of AFTEX shall coincide during the show. Offhand, AFTEX has a minimum of 30 representatives from the ASEAN.

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09:00 HRS- 1700 HRS
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World Trade Center Metro Manila (WTCMM)Manila, Philippines
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TARGET NUMBER OF BUYERS 2,500 trade buyers
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· Trimmings and Accessories
· Machineries and Equipment
· Finishing & Washing Facilities
· Software & Technology Solutions
· Support Services
CEO FORUM
Buyer's Perspective on....
· Future of Sourcing
· Flexible Manufacturing Process
· Retail Industry Trends
... in globalized economy

FAIR DATES

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09:00 HRS - 1700 HRS
VENUE
Halls A & B
World Trade Center Metro Manila (WTCMM)
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- Trimmings & accessories
- Machineries & equipment
- Washing & finishing facilities
- Garment exporters
- Software & technology innovations
- Support services

TREND & STYLE
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by Bayo, Bench, Plains and Prints, Sari-Sari
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by Fashion and Design Council of the Philippines
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By Willie Tan, President, Philippine Luen Thai Holdings, Executive Vice-President, Luen Thai Int'l Group.
"Global Apparel Sourcing: A Buyers Perspective"
By Tony Wong, Vice-President & Managing Director Foreign Operations – Far East, Philip Van Heusen.
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Effective Production Planning & Control
By Fast React Asia, Ltd.
January 11, 2003, 1:30 pm – 3:30 pm
World Trade Center Seminar Room, Hall B
Systematic Approach to Productivity Improvement
Apparel Solutions Asia Co., Ltd.
January 11, 2003, 3:30 pm – 5:00 pm
World Trade Center Seminar Room, Hall B

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MARUBENI THAILAND CO., LTD.
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NEW ORIENTAL [illegible]
[illegible]
TEXTILE MILLS ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILS. (TMAP)
[illegible] T. SALVADOR
THE GARMENT MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION IN CAMBODIA (GMAC)
UNICO INDUSTRIAL CORP
UNIX INDUSTRIAL CORP.
VEFI ASIA PTE LTD.
VIETNAM TEXTILE & APPAREL ASSOCIATION (VINATEX)
VIRTUAL ASIA INTERNET
YARN VENTURES RESOURCES, INC
YKK PHILIPPINES INC.
YUK MEI ENTERPRISES, LTD

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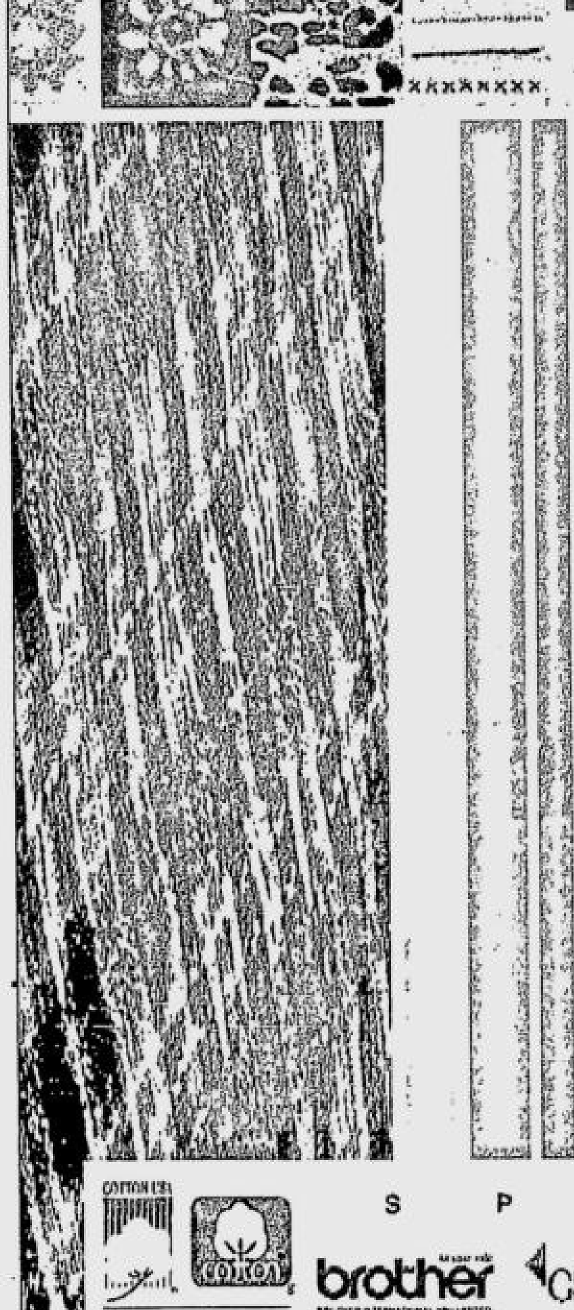

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  - **"Global Apparel Sourcing: A Buyers Perspective"**
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  - **"Quality Assurance from a Global Perspective"**
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- **Saving with SAHL**
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09-11 January 2003

World Trade Center
Manila, Philippines

Trade Exhibit

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Organized by: **CONFEDERATION OF GARMENT EXPORTERS OF THE PHILIPPINES (CONGEP)**, *in cooperation with the* **DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY (DTI)** *through the* **GARMENTS AND TEXTILE EXPORT BOARD (GTEB)**

For more information, please contact: CONGEP, Suite 609, Executive Building Center, Sen. Gil J. Puyat Avenue cor Makati Avenue, 1200 Makati, Philippines | Tel 632 895 1505 loc. 167, 168, 177 or 632. 897. 1481 | Telefax 632. 895. 7614 | E-mail info@sourceit.com.ph or congep@vasia.com

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Special PROJECT

SOURCE It 2003

(An Integrated Clothing –Textile Sourcing Fair)

9-11 January 2003

World Trade Center Metro Manila, Philippines

Messages

Our warmest greetings to the Confederation of Garment Exporters of the Philippines (CONGEP) and its supporters and participants as you begin the Source It Trade Fair 2003 at the World Trade Center Metro Manila on 9-11 January 2003.

Source It is the first integrated reverse trade fair for the garments & textile industry towards developing and improving supply-chain links and business solutions regionally. It is an "ASEAN Plus" initiative demonstrating creative resourcefulness brought about by globalization. By putting to work once again the same spirit of unity, cooperation and teamwork among government agencies, industry members and our Asian neighbors, we can achieve a win-win situation that will transition our economies towards harnessing all the benefits of free and fair trade.

The garments and textile sector is a global economic activity affecting all of us. The Source It initiative is an innovation that emphasizes the abundance of opportunities in a global enterprise.

Our sincere congratulations and best wishes to CONGEP, and we look forward to working closely with you and our partners in Asia towards sustaining the viability and competitiveness of the garments and textile industry.

Mabuhay!

MAR ROXAS
Secretary, Department of Trade and Industry

Congratulations to the organizers, supporters and participants of Source It Trade Fair 2003. We wish to assure the supporters and participants of the event that the Philippine Government, through the Garment and Textile Export Board (GTEB), in cooperation with other government agencies, recognizes the need to fully support such an undertaking that would not only rekindle interest in the local textile and apparel industry ; but which would revive the spirit of entrepreneurship in the country as well.

Hopefully, through the Confederation of Garments Exporters of the Philippines (CONGEP), this event would be instrumental in exploring the vast opportunities available to the textile and apparel industry. The event should be able to provide participants and supporters new insights on the inherent strengths of Philippine industries and business in view of the challenges posed by the impending effects of globalization.

To one and all, our best wishes and *Mabuhay!*

SERAFIN N. JULIANO
Executive Director
Garment and Textile Export Board (GTEB

On behalf of the Confederation of the Garments Exporters of the Philippines (CONGEP) it is my pleasure to welcome you to the first Source It Trade Fair 2003. This three-day event will gather leaders, suppliers and major local garment brands in the textile and apparel industry. It is hoped that through such a gathering , participants will be able to forge linkages that would further enhance the growth and development of their respective businesses. The trade fair will also serve as a preview of the major Asian textile manufacturers, as well as showcase of the major apparel brands in the Philippines. Hopefully, the trade fair will also provide insights on the vast opportunities that are still available in the Asian region with regard to its sizable and as yet untapped consumer market.

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PHILIPPINE EXPORTERS CONFEDERATION, INC. (PHILEXPORT)
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PHILIPPINE RETAILERS ASSOCIATION
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PH DESIGN STUDIO ONE
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SAHL SEWING SERVICES
SARI SARI
SOLID MILLS, INC.
SEVEN CORPORATION (BENCH)
SYNERGY SYSTEMS SALES & SERVICES CORPORATION
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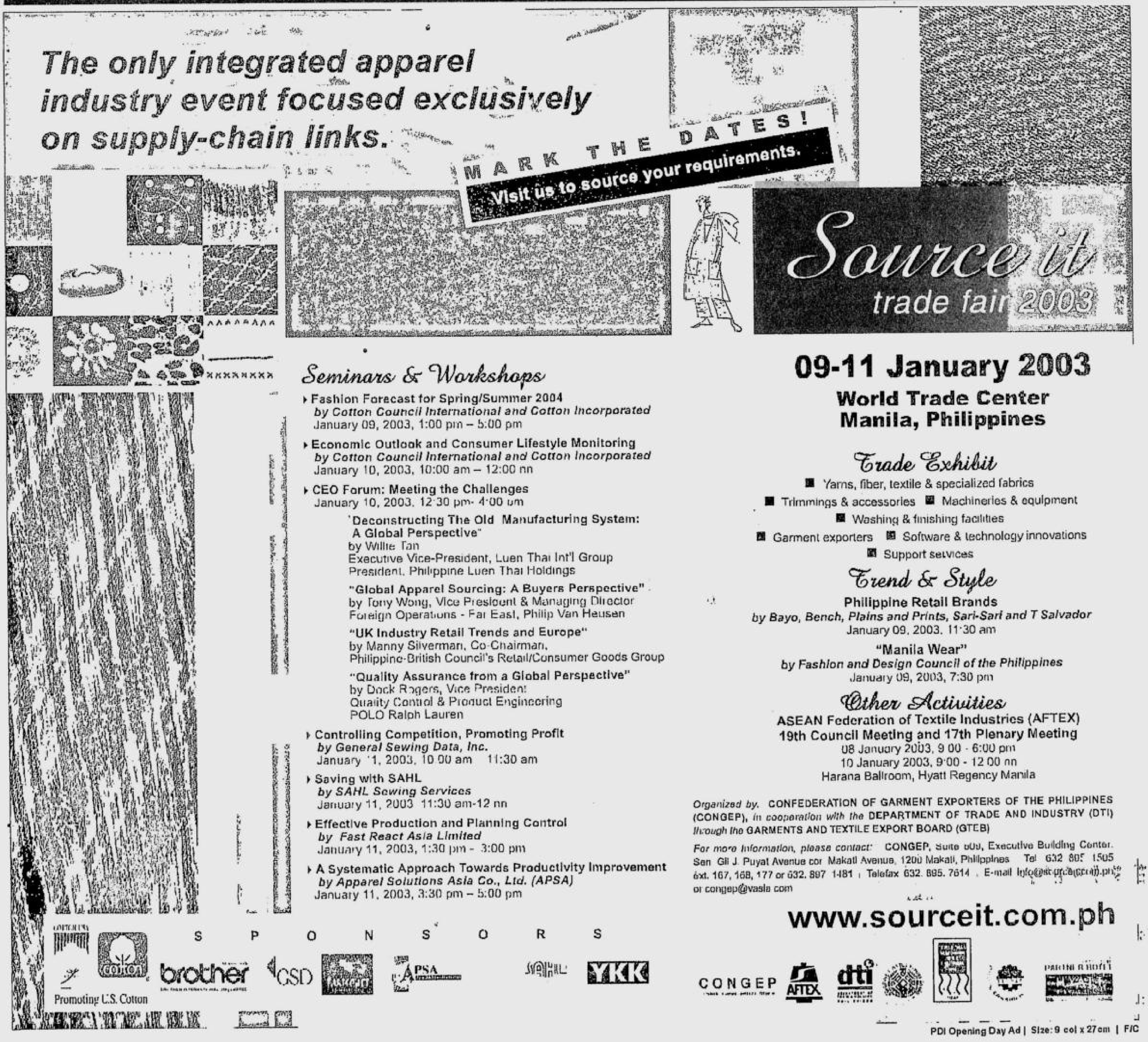
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- Fashion Forecast for Spring/Summer 2004
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January 09, 2003, 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm
- Economic Outlook and Consumer Lifestyle Monitoring
by Cotton Council International and Cotton Incorporated
January 10, 2003, 10:00 am – 12:00 nn
- CEO Forum: Meeting the Challenges
January 10, 2003, 12:30 pm- 4:00 pm
  "Deconstructing The Old Manufacturing System: A Global Perspective"
  by Willie Tan
  Executive Vice-President, Luen Thai Int'l Group
  President, Philippine Luen Thai Holdings
  "Global Apparel Sourcing: A Buyers Perspective"
  by Tony Wong, Vice President & Managing Director
  Foreign Operations - Far East, Philip Van Heusen
  "UK Industry Retail Trends and Europe"
  by Manny Silverman, Co-Chairman,
  Philippine-British Council's Retail/Consumer Goods Group
  "Quality Assurance from a Global Perspective"
  by Dock Rogers, Vice President
  Quality Control & Product Engineering
  POLO Ralph Lauren
- Controlling Competition, Promoting Profit
by General Sewing Data, Inc.
January 11, 2003, 10:00 am 11:30 am
- Saving with SAHL
by SAHL Sewing Services
January 11, 2003 11:30 am-12 nn
- Effective Production and Planning Control
by Fast React Asia Limited
January 11, 2003, 1:30 pm - 3:00 pm
- A Systematic Approach Towards Productivity Improvement
by Apparel Solutions Asia Co., Ltd. (APSA)
January 11, 2003, 3:30 pm – 5:00 pm

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▪ Trimmings & accessories ▪ Machineries & equipment
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Trend & Style
Philippine Retail Brands
by Bayo, Bench, Plains and Prints, Sari-Sari and T Salvador
January 09, 2003, 11:30 am
"Manila Wear"
by Fashion and Design Council of the Philippines
January 09, 2003, 7:30 pm

Other Activities
ASEAN Federation of Textile Industries (AFTEX)
19th Council Meeting and 17th Plenary Meeting
08 January 2003, 9:00 - 6:00 pm
10 January 2003, 9:00 - 12:00 nn
Harana Ballroom, Hyatt Regency Manila

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For more information, please contact: CONGEP, Suite 609, Executive Building Center, Sen. Gil J. Puyat Avenue cor Makati Avenue, 1200 Makati, Philippines Tel 632 895 1505 ext. 167, 168, 177 or 632. 897 1481 ; Telefax 632. 895. 7614 . E-mail info@sourceit.com.ph or congep@vasia.com

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PUBLIC NOTICES

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LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE is given that the estate of the late **ANATALIA E. FUNTALVA** was extrajudicially settled among her heirs as per Doc#446, Page#90, Book#XXV, Series of 2002, under Notary Public Fernando Collantes of Manila.
(PDI-Jan. 9, 16 & 23, 2002)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late **HILARIA V AUDENCIAL** with waiver of rights has been extrajudicially settled among her heirs as per Doc. No. 85; Page No. 73; Book No. V; Series of 2002 before Notary Public Atty. Jose D. Miguel of Cuyapo Nueva Ecija.
(PDI-Dec. 9, 16 & 23, 2003)

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Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Office of the Secretary
Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City

16 December 2002

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
No. 32
Series of 2002

Subject: FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE CONTROL AND ERADICATION MEASURES IN SLAUGHTERHOUSES

WHEREAS, Foot-and-Mouth Disease has in the past hit the country in epidemic proportions to the detriment of the livestock industry in particular and the economy in general;

WHEREAS, the National Government, under the leadership of the Department of Agriculture, embarked on a National Program for the Eradication of FMD and its initial success led to the OIE declaration of the whole Mindanao, Visayas and the islands of Masbate and Palawan as FMD-free zones;

WHEREAS, there is a need to sustain the gains achieved so far and for all sectors to support the effort to finally make the whole country FMD-free;

WHEREAS, an epidemiological study indicated that high percentage of FMD incidence were recorded in slaughterhouses and its immediate vicinity;

WHEREAS, there is a need to ensure that the appropriate control measures towards the full eradication of FMD are instituted in slaughterhouses;

NOW THEREFORE, I, LUIS P. LORENZO, JR., Secretary of Agriculture, do hereby issued this Order;

SECTION 1. **"ALL-IN, ALL-OUT" POLICY**

(a) All animals brought to the slaughterhouse are considered for the sole purpose of slaughtering. At no time shall holding pens be used for stocking purposes and/or holding area for live sales.

(b) All animals brought to the slaughterhouse must be covered by the permits/ documents as required by the controlling authority *(National Meat Inspection Commission for 'AAA' and 'AA' slaughterhouses and LGU for class A and non-accredited facilities)*. Owners are under obligation to provide the controlling authority with the necessary information about their animals for the purpose of traceability.

(c) All animals brought in the slaughterhouse shall be slaughtered within the day of its arrival. **NO SLAUGHTER ANIMAL SHALL BE KEPT IN THE LAIRAGE FOR MORE THAN 24 HOURS.**

SECTION 2. **CLEANING AND DISINFECTION**

(a) The schedule of daily operation of slaughterhouses shall be set as to ensure the proper cleaning and disinfection of the slaughter facility, equipment, lairage and surroundings. The following schedule shall be set by slaughterhouse management and shall be posted for the information of all.

Arrival and acceptance of animals for slaughter : ____________
Slaughter time : ____________
Cleaning and Disinfection : ____________
Rest period : ____________

(b) It is the responsibility of slaughterhouse operator to have a cleaning and disinfection program. Meat Control Officers and Meat Inspectors shall ensure that said program is religiously followed.

(c) Slaughterhouse operators shall provide ample supply of disinfectants and cleaning paraphernalia. Foot baths must be strategically positioned and all personnel shall be required to pass through them upon entering and leaving the establishment at all times.

(d) All vehicles must pass through the wheel bath upon entering the slaughterhouse premises at all times. They must be properly cleaned and disinfected before leaving the premises.

(e) In case an incidence of FMD is noted in animals kept in the lairage, the slaughterhouse shall be immediately closed for operation. It shall remain closed until after the management, under the supervision of the Regional FMD Task Force, shall have instituted thorough cleaning and disinfection of the whole slaughterhouse facility, equipment, lairage and surroundings. The affected pen and those immediately adjacent to it shall be kept vacant for two (2) weeks.

SECTION 3. **REPORTING**

(a) All regulatory officers (Meat Inspectors/Meat Control Officers), whether employed by the national or local government, shall include a notation on the required monthly slaughter report to be submitted to the next level of authority (i.e., Regional Director for NMIC, Municipality/City Veterinarian or Municipal Agricultural Officer for Municipal Meat Inspectors) as to the FMD situation in their area of responsibility. A negative monitoring report is equally important in monitoring the disease.

(b) Should an incidence of FMD be noted, the government regulatory officers assigned thereat must submit an FMD Investigation Report which includes an FMD Sample Submission Form and FMD Condemnation Report Form to his immediate technical superior (see 3.a above) within 24 hours when case was first noted.

(c) NMIC Regional Director shall immediately conduct investigation of reported FMD case in slaughterhouses. NMIC shall immediately inform National FMD Task Force of results its investigation.

SECTION 4. **PENALTIES**

(a) CSC Book V of EO 292 Chapter 7 Sec. 51 **Preventive Suspension** - The proper disciplining *authority (NMIC Executive Director or Local Chief Executives)* may preventively suspend any subordinate officer or employee under his authority pending an investigation in neglect of performance of duty, or if there are reasons to believe that the respondent is guilty of charges which would warrant his removal from the service.

(b) Refusal of slaughterhouse operator/owner to cooperate in the implementation of this regulation shall be deemed as grounds for revocation of the accreditation of the establishment and/or revocation of the permit to operate the said establishment.

SECTION 5. **EFFECTIVITY**

This Order shall take effect (15) days after publication in a newspaper of general circulation, and its filing with the UP Law Center.

Approved this January 6, 2003 in Quezon City, Philippines.

(Sgd.) **LUIS P. LORENZO, JR.**
Secretary

Recommended By:

(Sgd) **DR. EFREN C. NUESTRO**
Executive Director
National Meat Inspection Commission

(PDI--Jan. 9, 2003)

ASSET DISPOSAL PROJECT
NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION
Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO BID

"AS-IS-WHERE-IS"
for the SALE of

FUEL BARGE "T-228"

DATE OF BIDDING: JANUARY 23, 2003

The National Power Corporation will receive sealed bids on an "AS-IS-WHERE-IS" basis for the sale of the items described below:

ITEM / DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	MINIMUM BID PRICE
Lot 1 - One (1) Unit, FUEL BARGE (Non-propelled), "T-228" Material of Hull : Steel Length Overall (LOA) : 82.00 meters Length between Perpendiculars (LWL) : 81.26 meters Breadth (Molded) : 25.26 meters Number of Deck : Single Gross Tonnage (Approx) : 2,610 tons Net Tonnage (Approx) : 2,591 tons Fuel Barge Capacity : 40,000 barrels Date Launched : July 17, 1993 Shipbuilder Hull No. : 63	Batangas Coal-Fired Thermal Power Plant, Calaca, Batangas	P 43,470,000.00
Lot 2 - One (1) lot, Unserviceable Heavy Equipment, consists of 3-units "Euclid" Dump Truck; 1-unit "Caterpillar" Wheel Loader; 1-unit "Hino" Dump Truck; 2-units "Terex" Payloader; 1-unit "Tadano" Crane; 1-unit "Ford" Firetruck; 2-units "Toyota" Forklift and 1-unit "HydraMac" Skidloader.	Batangas Coal Fired Thermal Power Plant, Calaca, Batangas	P 457,710.00

Interested eligible bidders may obtain bidding documents upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Five Thousand Pesos (PhP5,000.00)** at the Asset Disposal Project (ADP) office, 3rd Floor, Building No. 1, National Power Corporation, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines.

Bids will be opened in the presence of bidders' representatives at **2:00 PM** on **January 23, 2003** at the NPC Solarium, NPC Head Office. Bids shall be accompanied by a Bid Bond of not less than ten percent (10%) of the total amount of bid. The Power Sector Asset and Liabilities Management (PSALM) Corporation has concurred with the bidding process and clearance for the disposal was duly approved.

NPC reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, to waive any informality, and to accept such bids as may be deemed most advantageous to the Government.

Deadline for the issuance of bidding documents is on **January 22, 2003**. For additional information, please call Asset Disposal Project at telephone nos. 922-3970 and 921-3541 loc. 5582 (c/o Mr. William F. Bautista), or e-mail us at adp@napocor.com.ph.

(Sgd.) **LEVI C. ARABELO**
Acting Head, Asset Disposal Project
and Bataan Nuclear Power Plant

(PDI--Jan. 9, 10 & 11, 2003)

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Bush set to launch $670-B economic recovery plan

CHICAGO—President George W. Bush was to launch an economic stimulus package Tuesday aiming to create millions of new jobs, while fighting off criticism that he is favoring the rich.

Bush's "growth and jobs" plan, to be officially unveiled in a speech in Chicago, would cost $670 billion over 10 years, with $98 billion in tax relief in the next 16 months, the Treasury Department said.

The Treasury confirmed that the plan would seek to eliminate tax on dividends paid to investors. It would also would bring forward tax cuts scheduled to take effect in 2004 and 2006 to this year.

"Under the president's proposal to speed up tax relief, 92 million taxpayers would receive, on average, a tax cut of $1,083 in 2003," said a Treasury document on the plan.

Commerce Secretary Donald Evans said the package would create 2.1 million jobs in three years.

"This is a very strong plan," Evans told CNN television, saying it would establish the conditions for the US economy to grow and create jobs "well into the future." The Treasury said the plan offers tax relief to "everyone who pays taxes—especially middle-income Americans." The administration has sought to fend off opposition attacks that Bush is favoring the wealthy and big business.

With the president facing reelection in 2004, he has made reviving the economy a top priority alongside domestic security and has said several times he is worried about the number of unemployed.

In November, there were 8.5 million Americans unemployed, 6 percent of the working population, according to the government. But huge stock market losses are also a concern for Americans. *AFP*

Opec mulls over raising oil output

LONDON—Hoping to ease fears of a possible oil shortage, Opec representatives plan an emergency meeting this weekend to discuss boosting the cartel's crude production by up to 6.5 percent, an Opec official said Tuesday.

Oil prices have surged in recent weeks on concerns about deepening turmoil in Venezuela and a possible war against Iraq—two key members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries. The group is now weighing proposals to increase output by as much as 1.5 million barrels a day in an effort to dampen prices.

A hike in production would represent an abrupt reversal in Opec policy.

Opec's 11 members decided less than a month ago to slash output by up to 1.7 million barrels a day in the hope of preventing a price decline when seasonal demand dips this spring.

Ministers of each member country except Algeria have agreed to meet Sunday at the group's headquarters in Vienna, Austria, the official said. Algerian minister Chakib Khelil was aboard a plane late Tuesday and could not be reached to confirm if he could attend, said the official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Since Opec's Dec. 12 decision to cut production, worrisome signs of a potential shortage have begun to appear.

Oil shipments from Venezuela, normally Opec's third-largest producer, have dwindled by some 80 percent due to a month-old strike aimed at forcing the country's president, Hugo Chavez, from office. A US-led attack on Iraq would halt exports from that country, which has the world's second-biggest crude reserves after Saudi Arabia.

Opec officials have said the group cannot pump enough additional crude to make up for a simultaneous loss of exports from Venezuela and Iraq, which together have historically exported roughly 4 million barrels a day. Opec's remaining members have a spare production capacity of 3.3 million barrels a day, according to the Paris-based International Energy Agency, the West's energy watchdog. *AP*

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Wall St. cautiously optimistic on 2003

NEW YORK—Some of Wall Street's savviest minds on Tuesday expressed cautious optimism that 2003 will be a better year for stocks, but also warned of dark clouds overhanging the market such as a possible war with Iraq.

"The underlying fundamentals of the market as measured by the economy and corporate earnings are in decent shape," Phil Orlando, chief investment officer at Value Line Asset Management, said. "We think the fiscal policy backdrop and the monetary policy backdrop is favorable."

But Orlando, who oversees more than $6 billion in equity and fixed-income assets, also sounded a note of caution as he addressed the sixth annual New York Society of Security Analysts (NYSSA) market forecast luncheon in New York.

"We're concerned about the overhang in the market, exogenous events: last year corporate malfeasance, this year geopolitical issues," he said. "But over time and I don't know what the time frame is there will be resolution."

Other pundits at the panel discussion said that President George W. Bush's $674-billion economic stimulus plan announced on Tuesday would provide a modest boost to stocks.

McManus said he saw a positive outcome for stocks if Iraqi President Saddam Hussein stepped down, averting war.

Bush's economic stimulus package—which eliminates the double taxation of dividends—may help some sectors, especially companies that are sitting on a lot of cash and that will pay dividends, said economist Maria Fiorini Ramirez.

However, Ramirez, who heads consulting firm Maria Fiorini Ramirez Inc., also sees danger signs ahead.

"The big cloud is the uncertainty in the Middle East," said Ramirez, selected by the Wall Street Journal as one of the top three economists for 2000. *Reuters*

IMF issues details on debt default plan

WASHINGTON—The International Monetary Fund on Tuesday released its most detailed proposal yet on its plan to develop a new way for sovereign nations to restructure unsustainable debts when they cannot pay their bills.

The lender laid out its proposals in a dense 76-page document which added myriad new wrinkles to its proposals to help nations like Argentina that face default on their debts.

But while the document added flesh to the bones of the plan, it also revealed that disagreements still remain among the lender's shareholders on exactly how to proceed.

The IMF first put forward its proposal in November 2001, in an effort to plug what it sees as a major hole in the global financial system. The issue has been given impetus by the economic meltdown in Argentina—a nation that suffered a messy debt default and has yet to secure a deal to restart aid and restructure its debts despite a tortuous year of talks.

Since first putting its plan forward, the lender has repeatedly refined its plan but has failed to quell stiff opposition from Wall Street.

The IMF's plan—called the Sovereign Debt Restructuring Mechanism—would give nations a framework to negotiate a debt restructuring with creditors. It would also set up a panel of judges to arbitrate disputes arising in those talks.

The IMF hopes its plan will lead to simpler debt restructurings which would be more transparent and efficient than the current system, where rogue investors can delay restructurings by suing for full payment in the courts. Wall Street, wary of interference from a new bureaucracy, opposes the scheme, saying the use of specific clauses in bond contracts would be a simpler solution.

To allay those fears, the IMF is also calling for the use of so-called collective clauses in bonds in tandem with its plan. Still, Wall Street opposition has been resolute.

For the plan to become reality, major hurdles remain, including the alteration of the IMF's constitution by an 85 percent majority of its voting board, and laws would need to be passed in many of its 184 member nations to pave the way for a new treaty to set up the mechanism. *Reuters*

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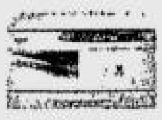

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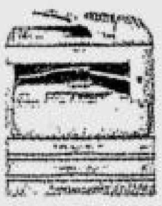

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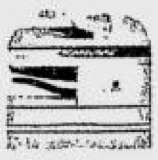

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it is dying that we are born to eternal life."

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March 14, 1927 – January 5, 2003

His loving wife **Au**; children **Tito** and **Girlie**, **Mike** and **Nimfa**, **Bernie** and **Alma, Cyrus** and **Michelle**; grandchildren **Mika, Iman Lia, Kitkat, Adrian, Mark, Makmak, Alyssa, Camille, Patrick** and **Ciara**; brothers and sister, relatives, friends, neighbors and colleagues request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the San Nicolas de Tolentino Mortuary, Pluto St., Congressional Village, Quezon City (behind Cherry Foodarama).

Necrological Mass and Service at the Auditorium of the Bureau of Soils and Water Management along Elliptical Road corner Visayas Ave., Quezon City at 10:00 a.m., Friday, January 10, 2003.

Cremation will follow at Paz Crematory, 2:00 p.m.

"In peace I shall both lie down and sleep, for you alone, Lord, make me secure...."
Psalm 4:9

MANUEL H. CASTRO, JR.

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord
on January 7, 2003 at the age of 72.

His bereaved wife **Cecille**; children and in-laws **Marichi & Bobby Guevara, Alma & Sandro Soriano, Jojo & Myrelle**, and **Christine**; grandchildren **Maita & Mariel Guevara, Thea & Joey Soriano**; sisters **Purificacion Concepcion & Valentina Santos**; relatives and friends request your prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Charity Chapel, Don Bosco Church, Arnaiz Avenue (formerly Pasay Road), Makati City.

Interment will be on Sunday, January 12, 2003 at the Manila Memorial Park in Sucat, Parañaque, after the 8:00 a.m. Mass at the Charity Chapel, Don Bosco Church.

ENGR. OLIVER H. VALDIVIA

was called home to the Lord on Saturday, January 4, 2003.

His loving wife **GREGORIA DIAZ VALDIVIA**; children **OLIVIA & General NICOLAS OLARTE, GREGORIO & EOSTRE, SALVADOR & INEZ, SYLVIA & DING MARFORI, JULITA & ANTON MONTES, Arch. CRISTITO & JOCELYN**; grandchildren, great grandchildren, brothers and sister, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

Interment will be on Thursday, January 9, 2003 at Heaven's Garden Memorial Park, Loakan Road, Baguio City, after the 8:30 a.m. Holy Mass at the St. Joseph Church, Pacdal, Baguio City.

"Lord, my alloted portion & my cup,
You have made my destiny secure..."
Psalm 16:5

DANIEL VELASCO ESTILLORE

Now peacefully rests in the infinite Grace
and Goodness of the Lord
on the 5th day of January 2003
at the age of 59.

His bereaved wife VICKY; his children with their spouses and grandchildren ALBERT, LEAH & GINO; BIMBO, MARNIE & DAX; DEAN JOY, MICHELLE & DC; ANTHONY (†), RICA, TENTEN & MIKE; his cousin MAMA LUZ; his brother SONNY & wife YVONNE; relatives and friends request those whose lives he has touched to continue to pray for his eternal repose. May his memory live in our hearts forever.

His remains lie in state at the Baguio Masonic Center, Lodge No. 67 at the back of the Baguio City Hall, Baguio City.

Interment will be on Saturday, January 11, 2003 at Bauang Cemetery, Bauang, La Union after the 8:00 a.m. Mass at the United Church of Christ in the Philippines [UCCP], Baguio City.

Corazon Diokno – Posadas

Of San Luis, Batangas and BF Homes, Parañaque
May 5, 1935 – January 7, 2003

Peacefully joined her Creator on January 7, 2003
at the age of 68.

Her loving husband **Leopoldo J. Posadas Jr**.; children **Ma. Patricia, Horacio, Bernadette** and **Jason Gonzalez**; granddaughter **Justine**; brothers, sisters and relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at St. Jerome Church, Alabang, Muntinlupa City and will be transferred to San Luis, Batangas on Friday.

Interment will be on Sunday, January 12, 2003 after the 1:00 p.m. Mass.

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January 3, 2003

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The Department of Health thru the Central Office Bids and Awards Committee (COBAC) is inviting bids from accredited contractors of the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) with minimum license category of "D" and "C" and registration of "Small B" for Building and Industrial Plant with Specialty on Electrical Works for the project Proposed DOH Warehouse Rewiring with Electrical Fixtures and Devices located at DOH Compound, Sta. Cruz, Manila.

The dates to be followed are:

1.	Submission of Letter of Intent, PCAB License and Registration (Bring original copies of Contractor's License for authentication) and Issuance of Eligibility Documents		January 9 to 17, 2003
2.	Submission of duly accomplished eligibility documents		January 24, 2003
3.	Posting of Eligible Contractors		January 31, 2003
4.	Issuance of Bid/Tender Documents		February 4 to 5, 2003
5.	Pre-bid Conference	10:00 AM	February 18, 2003
6.	Submission of Bids (deadline)	10:00 AM	March 6, 2003
7.	Opening of Bids	10:00 AM	March 6, 2003

Activities Nos. 1 to 4 above shall be held at the Office of the COBAC Secretariat, Procurement and Logistics Service, Bldg. No. 28, while activities nos. 5 to 7 shall be held at the Office of the COBAC Chairperson, Ground Floor, Bldg. No. 3, DOH, San Lazaro Compound, Sta. Cruz, Manila.

The complete set of Bid documents may be purchased by the interested eligible bidders upon payment of non-refundable fee of THREE THOUSAND PESOS ONLY (P3,000.00).

COBAC reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, waive any required formality and award the contract to any bidder whose proposal as evaluated by COBAC is the most advantageous to the Government. COBAC assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expenses or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of bids, nor does in guarantee that an award will be made.

The Approved Budget Cost will be announced during the pre-bid conference.

(Sgd.) ZENAIDA O. LUDOVICE, MD, MPH, CESO II
Assistant Secretary and Chairperson, COBAC

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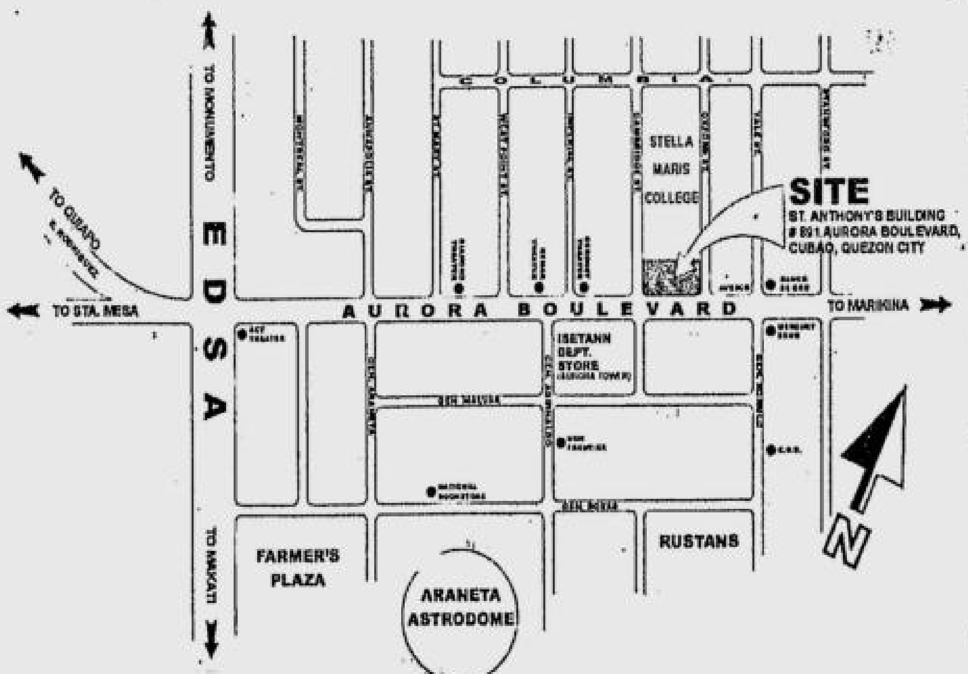

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Announce with deep sorrow the
passing of our beloved
Vice Chairman

Ambassador JOSE S. LAUREL, III

He peacefully joined his Creator on
January 6, 2003 at the age of 88.

His loving wife BEATRIZ,
children: Antonio, Jose V, Francis, Ma. Elena, Mercedes, Benjamin, Christine and Eduardo,
their husbands and wives, grandchildren and great grandchildren, brothers and sisters, other relatives
and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at St. James the Great,
Ayala Alabang Village, Muntinlupa City.

Interment will be on Friday, January 10, 2003 immediately after the
10:00 a.m. Mass at the Parish of St. James the Great.

In lieu of flowers, donations to the Philippine Institute of Japanese Language
and Culture at 825 R. Papa Street, Sampaloc, Manila will be highly appreciated.

LUZ LIMUACO FABELLA

Died on January 7, 2003 at the age of 90.

Her late husband **Ricardo Fabella**; loving children **Fe (†) & Rupe Batungbacal, Chit & Boy Fajardo, Lucy & Alex Lugtu, Tony Fabella** and **Rey & Ana Fabella**; grandchildren **Mariflor, Milen, Bobby, Manny, Jeannie, Alma, Jason, Mika, Mara, Mia & Gio**; great grandchildren **Paolo, Lian, Nicee & Nico**; relatives and friends request the pious readers to please pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, Pagsanjan, Laguna.

Interment will be on January 11, 2003 at the Pagsanjan Municipal Cemetery after the 8:00 a.m. Mass at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church.

Retired RTC Judge Honesto V. Morales

Daet, Camarines Norte
Born in Panganiban, Catanduanes on January 5, 1930,
has serenely joined the Lord in His Kingdom
on January 7, 2003 at the age of 73.

His bereaved wife **Adelaida**; his children **Mathew & Rose, Agnes & Willy, Honesto Jr. & Gina**, and **Sancho & Elena**; his grandchildren, sisters and brothers **Merced & Rufino Sr., Maria & Kikoy, Eving & Arthur, Carmen & Joey**; his nephews & nieces request the kind readers to please pray for his eternal rest.

His remains lie in state at St. Peter Memorial Chapels at 296 Quezon Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be announced later at Himlayang Pilipino.

LILIA RECTO VILLA

OF LIPA CITY

Peacefully joined our Lord and Mama Mary
on January 7, 2003

Her husband **Dr. Teodoro K. Villa, Sr.**; children **Doris** and **Romy Reyes, Eleen (Ebot)** and **Johnny Katigbak, Cecil (Again)** and **Michel Sayag, Teodoro (Rico)** and **Tess Villarama, Gerald (Aldy)** and **Mitos Seguismundo**; siblings **Nora Arreglado, Mercy** and **Tony Kison, Jose (Boy)** and **Nene Alandy-Dy, Malen**; grandchildren **Nikko, Aeisa, Todd, & Mikel Reyes, Cayo, Bryan, Marya, Nique, & Leon Katigbak, Aj & Raj Villa, Vincent, Abi, & Dana Villa**, in-laws, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Chapel of the Resurrection, San Sebastian Cathedral, Lipa City.

Interment will be on Friday, January 10, 2003 at Eternal Gardens after the 2:00 p.m. Mass.

In lieu of flowers Donations to St. Joseph Seniorate,
Home for the Aged and Sick Priests of the Archdiocese of Lipa
will be deeply appreciated.

MA. AURORA EDNA A. ORTEGA

of Baguio City and Quezon City

Now peacefully rests in the infinite Grace and Goodness of the Lord
on January 7, 2003 at the age of 50.

Her loving parents **Ernesto C. Ortega** and **Aurora Alano**; sister **Shirley Marie A. Ortega**; brothers **Sandy** and **Edwin**; sister-in-law **Maria Luisa** and relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body which lie in state at the Mortuary of the Twin Hearts of Jesus and Mary Parish Church at the corner of Bulletin and Daily Mirror Sts., Quezon City will be interred after the 3:00 o'clock p.m. Mass on January 10, 2003.

BELINDA NATIVIDAD SAROL

Peacefully joined our Lord
on January 7, 2003 at the age of 65.

Her loving husband **Jess**; children **Raymund & Jay, Aying & Lilen, Nano & Bhel, Bernard & Marte, Cho (†), James & Josie, Ricky & Arlene, Manny & Jhing** and **Epet**; grandchildren, relatives and friends request prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Marian Memorial Chapels, Marcos Highway, Antipolo City. On January 10, she will be transferred to the La Milagrosa Village Chapel, Marikina.

Interment will be on Saturday, January 11 at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at the LMV Chapel.

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Automotive industry slump over

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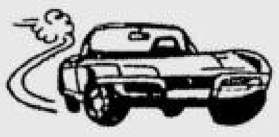

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ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
MOTORING
THURSDAY, JANUARY 9, 2003

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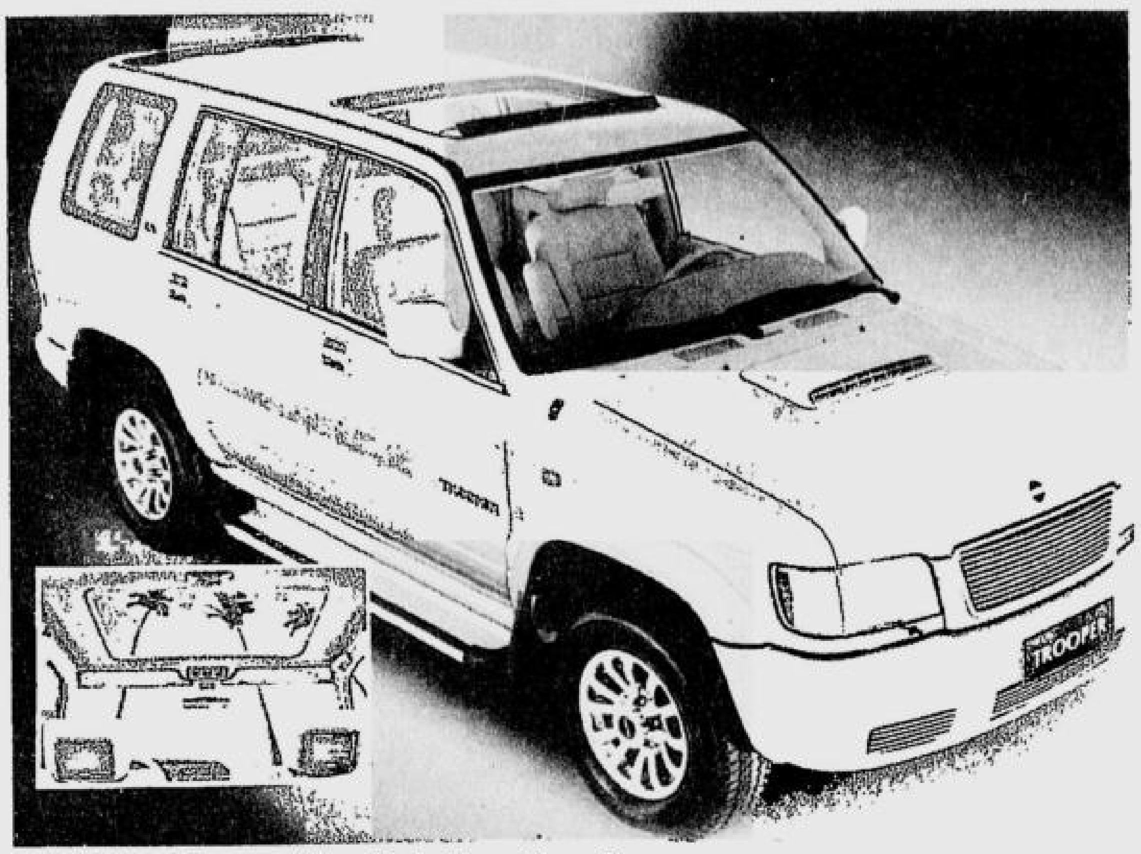

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BEST COPY AVAILABLE

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Text and photos by Charles E. Buban

IT'S longer, it's wider, it's spacious inside—everything seems superlative with this minivan. But there's a reason it should be: Chrysler Town & Country is meant to get everybody and everything inside.

Yet Chrysler made sure not to shortchange the occupants ensuring they travel in complete luxury and convenience.

Just to find out how comfortable and versatile this minivan is, the INQUIRER was lucky enough to borrow a steel blue LXi variant from Norkis Automotive Resources Corp., the Town & Country's exclusive distributor here.

"This vehicle has many charms, among them a plush interior, classy looks, plenty of power and crisp handling that belies its size. Truly this is a value for your money family-oriented van," NARC national marketing manager Porti Vencer assures buyers of this P1.9 million minivan.

Nothing mini

The LXi we drove around is an automatic front-wheel-drive seven-seater, powered by a 3.3-liter V6 SOHC engine and we assure you there's nothing mini about this minivan.

The Town & Country is about the same length as the biggest minivan on the market, as we found out, measuring at 509.3 cm in length and 199.6 cm in width. It stretches across a wheelbase of 303.0 cm, about 15 cm longer than its sibling, the Chrysler Voyager (not yet sold here).

The driver is blessed with an eight-way power adjustable seat and a steering wheel-mounted speed control that comes in handy while driving on a long stretch of highway.

As for the other six passengers, they are provided with bucket seats (up to the middle row), and a 50-50 split third-row bench seat.

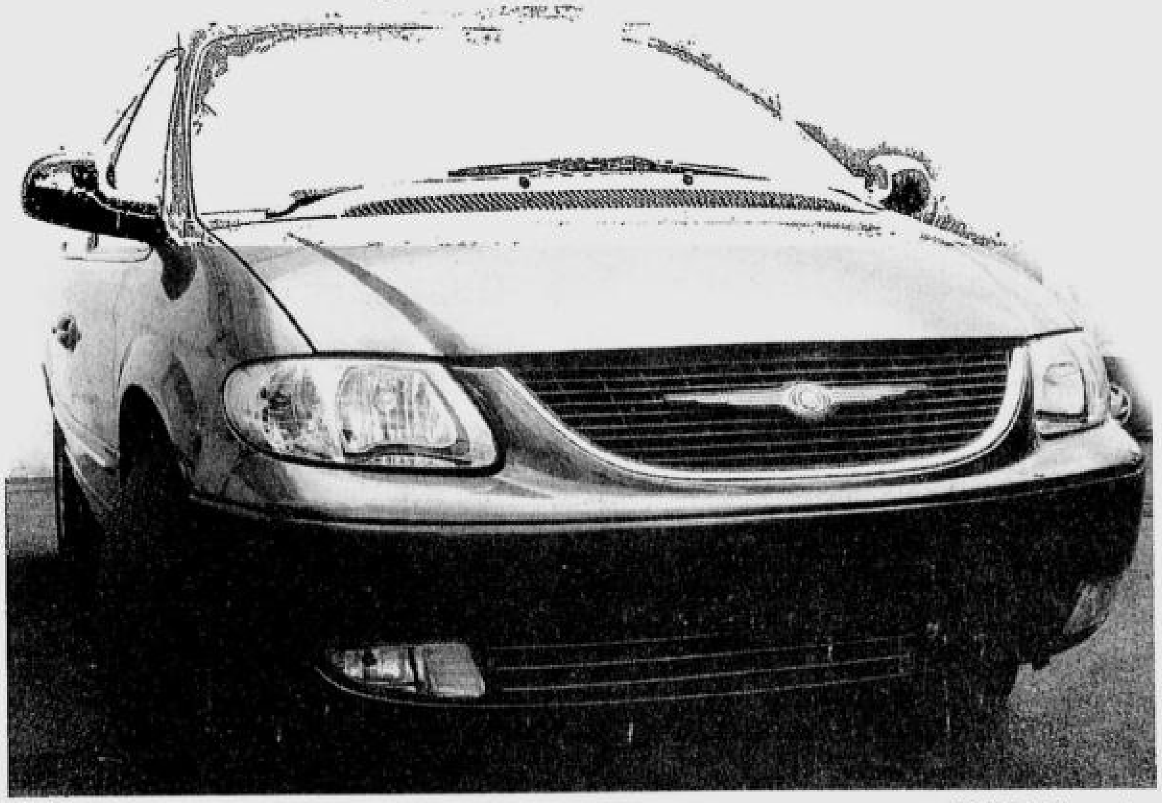
Each leather seat can be removed individually, reclined or folded flat to accommodate whatever configuration preferred (to accommodate various equipment or seat layout). Also at the rear are parcel shelves, located at floor or midlevel positions, that include pop-up storage dividers.

Like magic

But what definitely endeared us to the Town & Country is its power-assisted sliding doors on both sides and its industry-first power liftgate at the rear.

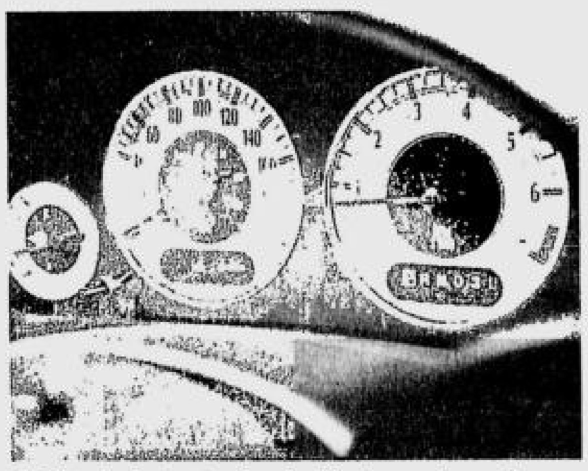
A push of a button on the multifunction key lets you operate from a distance the opening or closing of the side doors or liftgate.

This feature comes in handy whenever all your arms are filled with grocery bags or other things (or perhaps just to impress someone, as in our case).

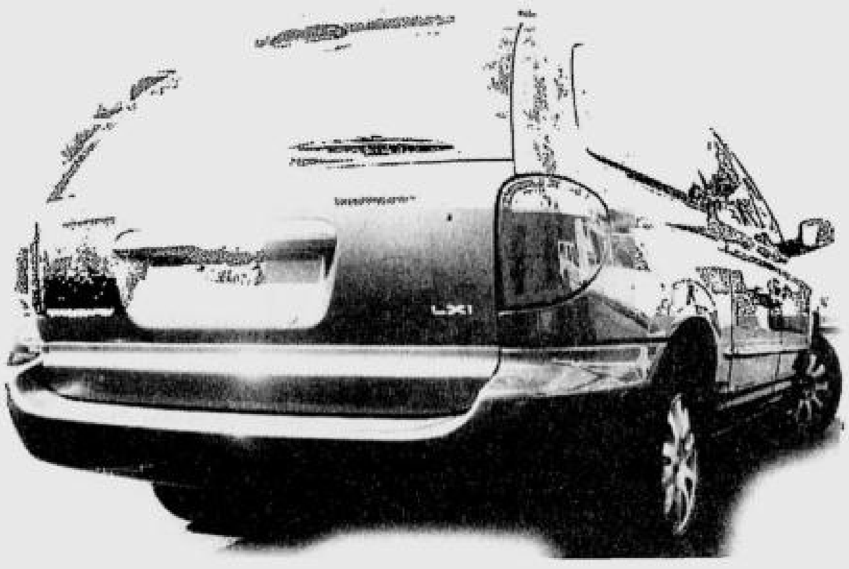


INSIDE this gentle giant is a 3.3-liter engine capable of generating 180 horses and 210 (at 4,000 rpm) torque.

WITH SO many features within your reach, this minivan promises a comfortable driving experience.



NICE to look at retro-inspired instrument panel



IF your travel plans include towing, this minivan can still pull up more than 1,700 kg of equipment.

"If not using the key, you can also automatically operate them inside from controls located at the overhead console at the front. Of course, you can always manually open them," informs Edwin Vergara of NARC.

As a safety feature, we were informed that the motors operating the sliding doors and liftgate feature an obstacle detection system that conveniently stops whenever something or any part of your body is jamming its path. It is suitable for children who could get hurt while fiddling with the door.

Brimming with devices

The Chrysler Town & Country makes you feel like you're driving a refined, upscale vehicle. It comes with an overhead console brimming with navigation devices including a display that tells you how many more liters to go before the minivan's 80L fuel tank capacity bottoms out.

It also has a three-zone temperature control system that can be automatically set and be controlled at the front to ensure everybody inside is cooled.

For safety, the Town & Country is equipped with a driver depowered air bag, passenger depowered air bag, child safety locks, and child seat tethers and anchors, steel side guard door beams and structural reinforcements to protect passengers from the effects of an impact.

Chrysler engineers also incorporated an electric rear-window defroster and side-window demisters to keep everything clear for optimum visibility at all angles of this wonderful minivan.

What to like

SUMPTUOUS and elegant interior plus the power sliding side doors and liftgate. And don't forget the overhead console that reminds you of how many kilometers left to empty.

What not to like

AT 7.65 KM a liter (13.1L/100km) at city driving and 10.2 km/L (9.8L/100km) on the highways, this minivan is on the guzzler side. But if you can afford its P1.9-million price tag, surely the gasoline bill is the least of your worries.

Toyota No. 1 again, tops all categories in 2002

TOYOTA Motor Philippines Corp. returned to form with a complete dominance of the automotive sales of the country by topping all categories in 2002.

Toyota closed out the year with total sales of 24,574 units, marking an increase of 24 percent from 2001. It also increased its total market share to 28 percent jumping from 26 percent the previous year despite aggressive efforts from its competitors. Toyota also recaptured the No. 1 position as the best-selling commercial vehicle brand in the Philippines.

Strong sales

The strong sales of its Corolla Altis and Camry models pushed Toyota back to the top of the passenger car market last year with total sales of 8,997 units, capturing 41 percent of the total passenger cars for 2002. Strong sales of the Corolla Altis led Toyota's resurgence with sales of 5,291 units outselling the Honda Civic with a ratio of almost 2 is to 1. The Camry, which marked its worldwide debut last year, emerged as the best-selling medium luxury car in the market with sales of 754 units for the year.

Major facelift

Toyota retained the distinction as the best-selling commercial vehicle brand in the country with total sales of 15,757 units last year for almost 25 percent of the total CV market.

Toyota's mainstream model the Revo, emerged once again as the best-selling vehicle in the country for the fifth straight year. After undergoing a major facelift, the Revo closed out 2002 with total sales of 11,715 units reflecting a 16 percent jump in sales from the previous year despite new model entries in its class as well as aggressive AUV models. The CRV sold a total of 7,125 units while the Crosswinds had reported sales of 8,290 units for last year.

Overall leader

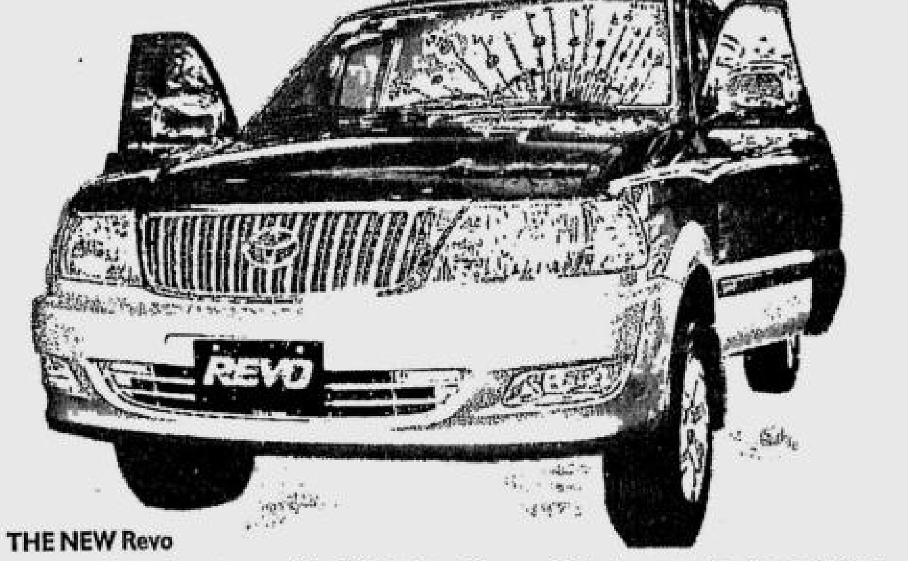
Toyota closed out the year 2002 in a fitting fashion by topping all segments of the market, the only manufacturer to ever accomplish the feat—and thrice at that in 1994 and 1995. Since then, it has remained the overall automotive leader until it relinquished the passenger car leadership to Honda in 1996 and the overall leadership briefly to Mitsubishi in 1998.

Last year, Toyota further strengthened its market position with aggressive and innovative sales promotion activities to cover a wider market.

More services

It focused on vehicle affordability by financing packages suited to the varying capability of its customers. This focus is further highlighted with the formation of the Toyota Financial Services in the country that aims to provide all Toyota customers with the best auto loan packages and affordable financing deals.

Toyota also strengthened its customer service activities with the launch of the Express Maintenance Service and Thunder Service programs, which will revolutionize the standards of car maintenance and will cover out-of-warranty Toyota vehicles as well.



THE NEW Revo

Is 'LPG car' a safe, wise alternative?

From page B12

ways have allowance for safety, aside from the fact that the tank is firmly anchored inside the car trunk.

Petron claims that an auto-LPG tank is made of carbon steel and is 20 times tougher than a typical gasoline, methanol or ethanol tank. It also said today's cars are also have crumple zones that would absorb most of the impact of a collision. The residual force from that would not be sufficient to damage, or ignite, the cylinder. The tank will explode only in the event of a fire when the surrounding temperature exceeds 500 degrees Centigrade.

New autogas cylinders, Petron said, are manufactured with a device that shuts off the filling process when the tank reaches 80 percent of its liquid capacity, allowing for temperature-related expansion in fuel volume without any gas released. New designs of autogas engines (such as those Petron is introducing) are fitted with safety devices that shut off valves automatically if the fuel line ruptures.

An LPG-powered Corolla owned by Randy Quijano of Petron, is a hybrid. The vehicle was configured to run on either LPG or gasoline. A conversion switch would shift fuel lines from LPG to gas, or vice versa. Also set up in the changeover switch is an indicator for the LPG content of the tank. The conversion for a carburetor-type car would take a day to finish, and should only be done by authorized technicians only.

Fueled in Petron San Gabriel, Barrio Ugong, Pasig (the first LPG fueling station in the Philippines), the car's 40-liter auto-LPG tank takes about three minutes to fill.

We only got to start and rev the engine (which, by the way, gurgled smoothly). Perhaps a brief test drive would have determined if LPG really had a higher octane rating (LPG is claimed to have an 8 octane rating). Petron also claimed the LPG eliminated the need for fuel additives.

Then there's another type of LPG being offered recently. It's LPG and diesel fuel—meaning diesel mixed with LPG—two fuels being injected.

Why LPG?

A serious problem needs an instant solution. When Metro Manila was predicted by several health experts to be no longer livable in 10 years due to pollution from motor vehicles, the clamor for alternative fuel vehicles began. This resulted in the passage of the Clean Air Act. Alternative fuels such as compressed natural gas, alco diesel and cocomethyl ester got a second, more serious look.

But the alternative fuel, which had been one of the most accessible and affordable, so far, had been literally right under our dining tables. LPG is one of the most familiar fuels in the country, and this is not an idea too hard to accept when it was first introduced to run not only kitchens, but cars as well.

Low emissions

Admittedly, LPG as motor fuel has its merits. Airborne emissions from autogas are among the lowest. Autogas' low emission characteristics are considered environment-friendly. It has been said, though, that starting up an LPG-powered engine emits somewhat higher emissions, and it takes longer to "warm up" the engine.

Petron, however, claims LPG would ultimately minimize noxious and toxic pollutants and greenhouse gases. LPG proponents insist that converted gasoline-powered engines tend to run more smoothly using Petron's autogas. Autogas is also said to reduce engine wear and requires less frequent spark plug and oil changes.

Critics, however, note that LPG-powered vehicles' valve and valve seats wear off easily, and that engine performances have so far been inconsistent with claims of higher octane ratings. Arabejo was quick to note that valve and valve seat recession happens only when the fuel octane rating reaches more than 100 (LPG autogas has a 98 octane rating).

Price may be the ultimate argument. LPG proponents claim LPG saves motorists an average 30 percent compared to gasoline. Arabejo said that as of Dec. 13, 2002, autogasul costs P15.32 per liter, 15 to 20 percent lower than gasoline. Additional savings could be derived from the longer use of spark plugs—estimated from 18,000 to 75,000 km; oil and filter change—from 10,000 to 20,000 km; and engine overhaul—from 200,000 to 400,000 km.

Environmental benefits

Then top it off with environmental benefits. Petron Autogasul cited tests at the independent Millbrook Vehicle Emissions Laboratories in the United Kingdom in 1998 and 1999. It showed LPG, compared to gasoline, emitted 75 percent less carbon monoxide, 85 percent less hydrocarbons, 20 percent less oxides of nitrogen, 18 percent less ozone-forming potential and 15 percent less carbon dioxide.

For those who see the benefits outweighing the risks, conversion of their cars' engines from carburetor-type to autogas would take only a day, and based on 2002 figures, the cost of conversion ranges from P18,000 to P23,000 depending on the number of vehicles the owner wishes to convert. The more units, said Arabejo, the less costly.

Not something new

LPG as a motor fuel is not something new. In fact it has been in use as a fuel for the past 40 years in the Netherlands and Italy. About 95 percent of taxis in Japan are said to be powered by auto-LPG.

Over 4 million vehicles (others claim 8 million and 32,000 refilling sites) in over 40 countries today run on auto-LPG. More than 1.4 million vehicles in South Korea have been using autogas. Vehicles in Turkey, Australia, Russia, Mexico, Japan, United States, France, Bulgaria and Algeria have also been using autogas.

Threats to safety

In Cebu, several taxi fleets are already powered by LPG with technology courtesy of Shell.

But considering the "entrepreneurial spirit" of Filipinos, there is the prospect of the proliferation of underground, unregulated auto-LPG tank manufacturers, and they could pose threats to the safety of the motoring public.

But come to think of it, LPG is quite advantageous for taxis—these ever-on-the-move cars that don't need to park in basements, and driven by drivers that need the 30-percent savings on fuel, and some breathable air, for a change.

They would just have to keep mum on the LPG tank in the trunk, though, so as not to make paranoid customers more jittery.

MOTORING

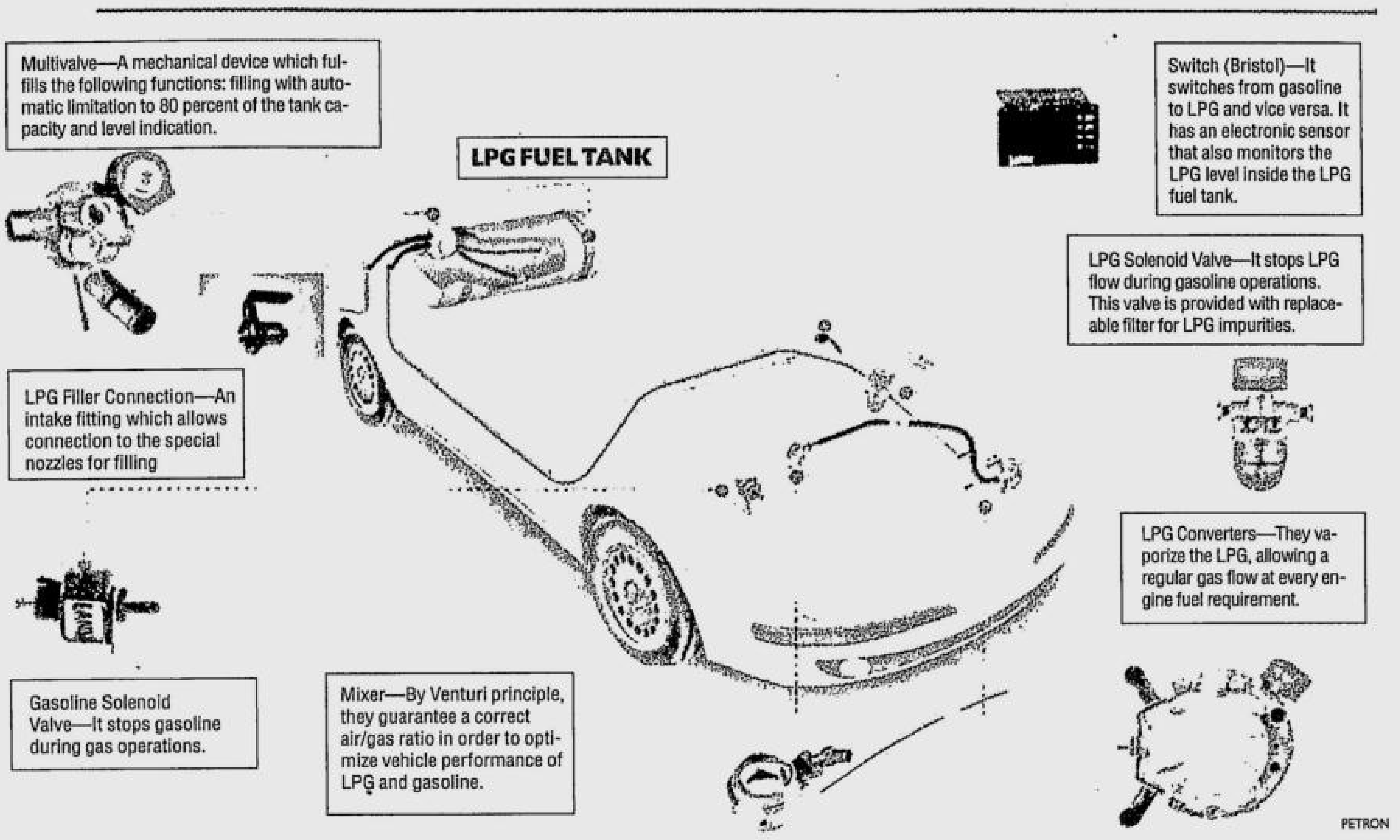
Editor **Cesar D. Mangawang**

Is 'LPG car' a safe, wise alternative?

By Tessa R. Salazar

OUR first encounter with a "freak" car—a car with a "strange diet and a strange stomach," a car running on liquefied petroleum gas and its tank inside the trunk—was a few days before Christmas.

Auto-Gasul: Carburetor System



Multivalve—A mechanical device which fulfills the following functions: filling with automatic limitation to 80 percent of the tank capacity and level indication.

Switch (Bristol)—It switches from gasoline to LPG and vice versa. It has an electronic sensor that also monitors the LPG level inside the LPG fuel tank.

LPG Solenoid Valve—It stops LPG flow during gasoline operations. This valve is provided with replaceable filter for LPG impurities.

LPG Filler Connection—An intake fitting which allows connection to the special nozzles for filling

LPG Converters—They vaporize the LPG, allowing a regular gas flow at every engine fuel requirement.

Gasoline Solenoid Valve—It stops gasoline during gas operations.

Mixer—By Venturi principle, they guarantee a correct air/gas ratio in order to optimize vehicle performance of LPG and gasoline.

PETRON

Our first reaction, given the social situation, was that this car would always pose as a security threat. The tank looked like a bomb wired at the trunk. We wouldn't be surprised if the parking guards and attendants dived to the floor the moment they opened the trunk of this car.

Fears

In all honesty, the LPG tank was still a very novel idea for us motoring journalists, and one that inspired more fear than admiration. Though the car itself was a beauty to admire at—a blue Toyota Corolla XE—we cringed at the sight of the trunk opening and an LPG tank inside. And the car had been under the sun all morning.

Mind you, though, the LPG tank was not that big. It occupied less than half of the trunk space; enough room for the spare tire.

Our fears weren't without basis. We were reminded that these cars weren't allowed to park inside basements. Punctured tanks or tubes could leak gas and fill enclosed spaces. Imagine what would happen if someone decided to light a cigarette in the basement at that time. But suffice to say, said LPG car proponents, LPG vehicles are often recommended for mobile taxi fleets that wouldn't really need basement parking slots.

Quality control

And then there's the issue of quality control. Who determined the make and thickness of the tanks and tubes? In other countries, the auto-LPG tank's thickness is about 2.5 mm.

Experts here note that, given the climate and the road conditions here in the Philippines, tanks should be at least 3 mm thick. Automotive technologist Alex Loinaz, who specialized in auto-LPG during the '70s, confirmed that 3-mm thickness is still the standard for auto LPG tanks in the country but the thickness, he said, may be revised in the future.

Loy D. Arabejo, Petron Auto Gasul technical services engineer, said the thickness being used in Petron's autogasul tank is the same with Thailand and Australia but definitely thinner than household LPGs which is 3 mm thick.

Safety

This should not be a cause for concern, he said, because the auto-LPG tanks al-

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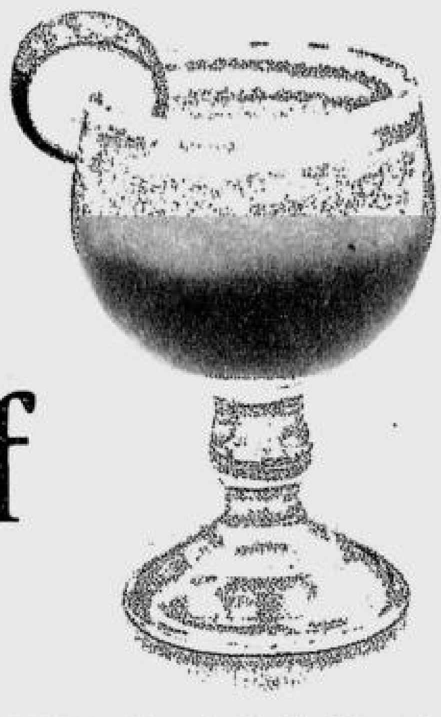


GRANDE, on the rocks Skie Blue Margarita

Salsa on the side and other hot stuff

Café Lupe on Edsa offers Mexican cuisine and huge shots of tequila but it also dishes out Pinoy comfort food

Text by Anne A. Jambora
Photos by Randy Hormillosa

RIGHT by the 18-story towering billboard signs by the Guadalupe bridge corner Edsa is a new hub for the metropolis' busybodies, a quasi-industrial architectural interpretation of the Aztec pyramids, complete with the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe shipped from Mexico. And rightly so for a Mexican grill and restaurant where dining under the signs can either be for business or pleasure.

Café Lupe Grill and Restaurant (tel. 899-2145) is the brainchild of MacGraphic Carranz billboard COO-president Alvin Carranza. The idea of opening a Mexican restaurant crossed his mind four years ago when he started to frequent nightspots after work hours either to kill time while waiting for the traffic to thin out or to hang out with friends. Instead of patronizing other people's businesses, why not put up one of his own and chill out at his own restaurant?

A devotee of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Carranza closed a deal with the Guadalupe seminary and transformed the once barren, hilly landscape into an interesting structure of imperfection. Carranza decided to retain the name Guadalupe and gave the place a Mexican ambience. The three air-conditioned function rooms also bear Mexican names.

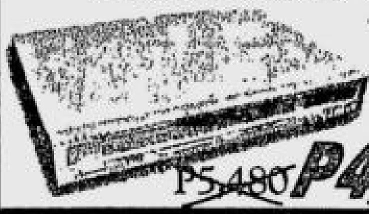
Function rooms

The Guadalajara Room is named after Mexico's center for arts and culture. The Rio Grande owes its name to the Pasig River since the place is located near the river (a mural of the Pasig River as envisioned by an artist is on one wall). The third and new function room, Juan Diego, is an art gallery of sorts with a casual atmosphere. Once a month, artworks of a featured artist are exhibited for sale, with part of the proceeds going to the Rotary Club New Manila East's milk feeding program, Yes to Milk, No to Drugs.

All function rooms can comfortably seat 50-70 people, and a full range of presentation equipment is available. Café Lupe offers business packages at a fraction of what hotels charge, and has valet parking services for up to 80 cars. For those using the public transformation, it's just an MRT ride away, with the Guadalupe station just a few steps outside its doors.

Just as Café Lupe presents a variety of dining experiences—the veranda, function rooms and open-air ground level—its menu and bar offerings are ingenuous. There's even

SALSA/ C3



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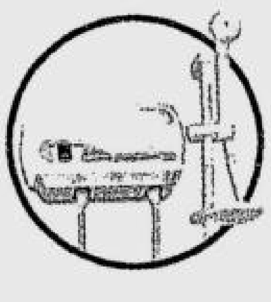

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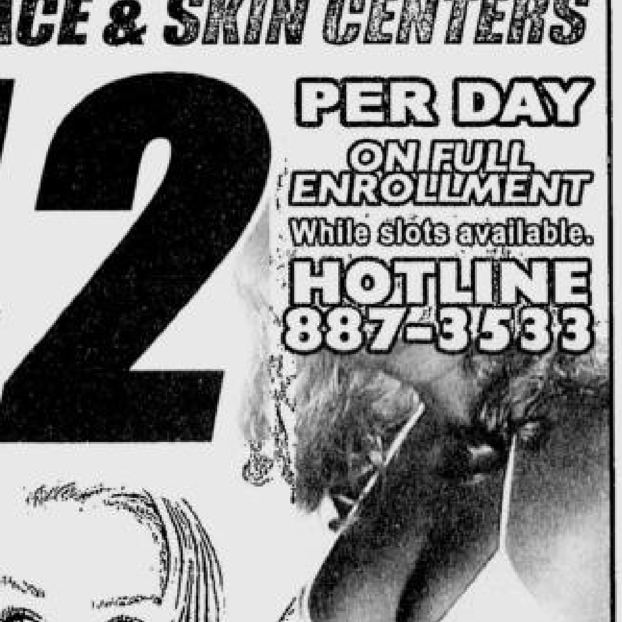

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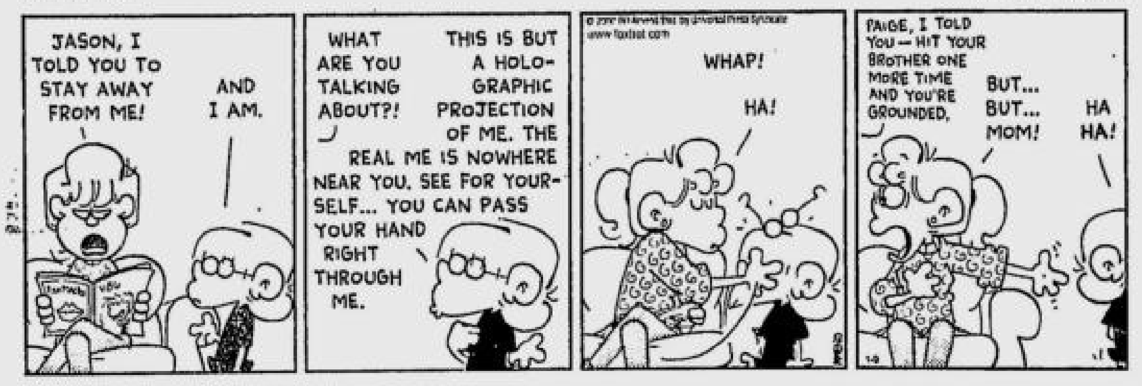
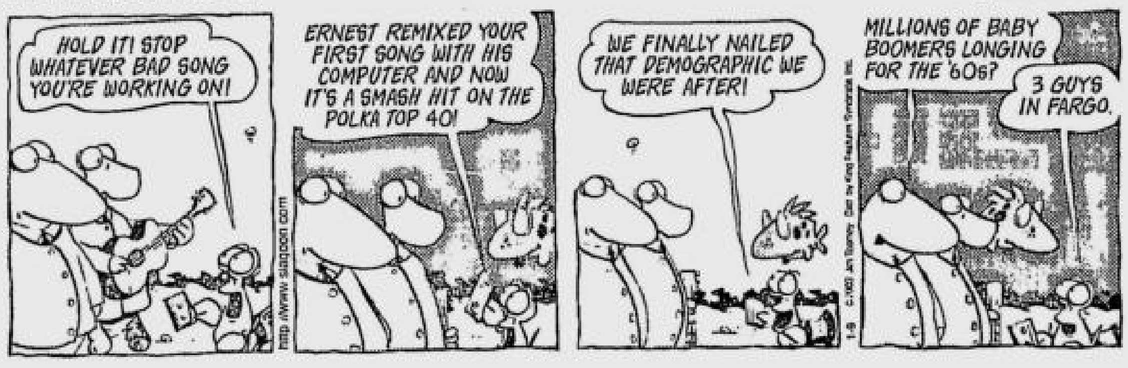
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


JASON, I TOLD YOU TO STAY AWAY FROM ME!
AND I AM.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?!
THIS IS BUT A HOLOGRAPHIC PROJECTION OF ME. THE REAL ME IS NOWHERE NEAR YOU. SEE FOR YOURSELF... YOU CAN PASS YOUR HAND RIGHT THROUGH ME.
WHAP!
HA!
PAIGE, I TOLD YOU — HIT YOUR BROTHER ONE MORE TIME AND YOU'RE GROUNDED.
BUT... BUT... MOM!
HA HA!

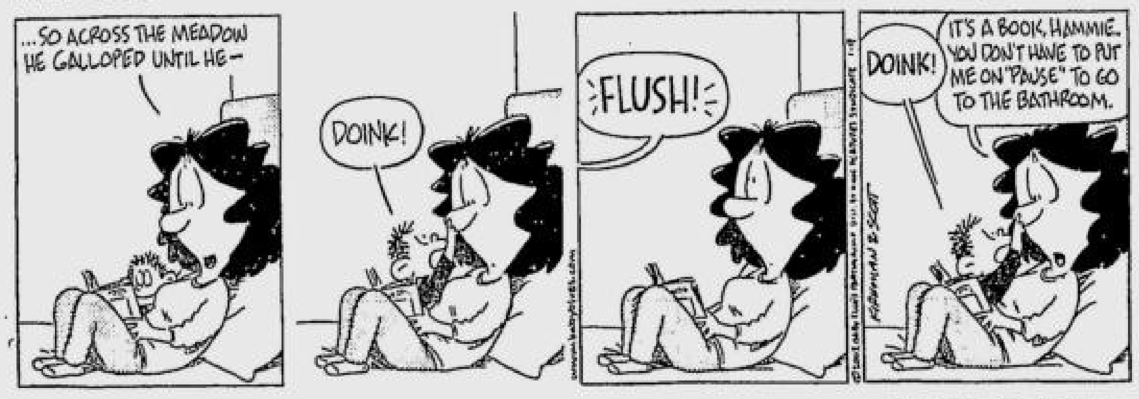
SHERMAN'S LAGOON

BY JIM TOOMEY


HOLD IT! STOP WHATEVER BAD SONG YOU'RE WORKING ON!
ERNEST REMIXED YOUR FIRST SONG WITH HIS COMPUTER AND NOW IT'S A SMASH HIT ON THE POLKA TOP 40!
WE FINALLY NAILED THAT DEMOGRAPHIC WE WERE AFTER!
MILLIONS OF BABY BOOMERS LONGING FOR THE '60s?
3 GUYS IN FARGO.
http://www.slagoon.com

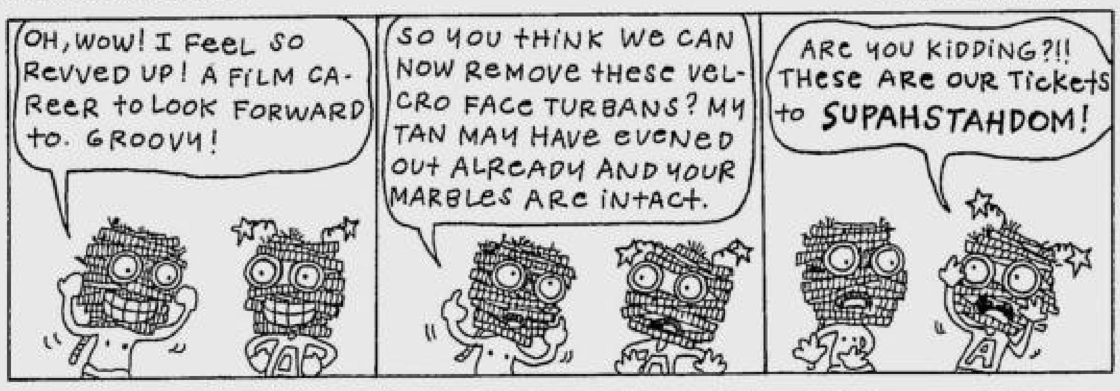
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


...SO ACROSS THE MEADOW HE GALLOPED UNTIL HE—
DOINK!
FLUSH!
DOINK!
IT'S A BOOK, HAMMIE. YOU DON'T HAVE TO PUT ME ON "PAUSE" TO GO TO THE BATHROOM.
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


OH, WOW! I FEEL SO REVVED UP! A FILM CAREER TO LOOK FORWARD TO. GROOVY!
SO YOU THINK WE CAN NOW REMOVE THESE VELCRO FACE TURBANS? MY TAN MAY HAVE EVENED OUT ALREADY AND YOUR MARBLES ARE INTACT.
ARE YOU KIDDING?!! THESE ARE OUR TICKETS TO SUPAHSTAHDOM!

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Crystal Gayle, Joan Baez, Jimmy Page, A.J. McLean

Happy Birthday: You will be tempted to take on tasks that are not necessary and might even stand in the way of your success. Be wise in your choices. Do for yourself and refrain from letting others take up your time unnecessarily. Your numbers are 5, 17, 25, 29, 34, 40

ARIES (March 21-April 19): You will be a little out of sorts if things don't go according to plan today. Steer clear of a debate that may lead to trouble. Channel your energy into physical activity.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Travel for the purpose of completing unfinished business. Don't let anyone stop you from doing what is important to you or waste time so that you fall behind.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Mingle with interesting people today. An opportunity to further a relationship you are already in or begin a new one is apparent. Your energy is high and a group you join will welcome your stamina and aggressiveness.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): If you are confused or disorganized you will not be able to see things clearly, leading to a poor decision. Don't allow your emotional attitude to affect your performance at work.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): This is not the day to fool around or neglect yourself. Take care of any health problems that surface no matter how unimportant they seem. Go over your personal papers.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): It appears that you can get ahead if you are quick to take advantage of the possibilities that surround you. You should be talking about your intentions so that everyone around you is fully aware of your goals.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): You can double your money if you use your assets to turn over bigger profits. Someone you are close to will not agree with your choices today. Take the time to explain.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Prepare yourself for change. If you are accepting and can adjust, you can actually make some positive gains. Do not pay too much for a household item.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): You can resolve some issues that have been bothering you for some time now. If you make changes regarding investments and personal matters, you will prosper and persuade others.

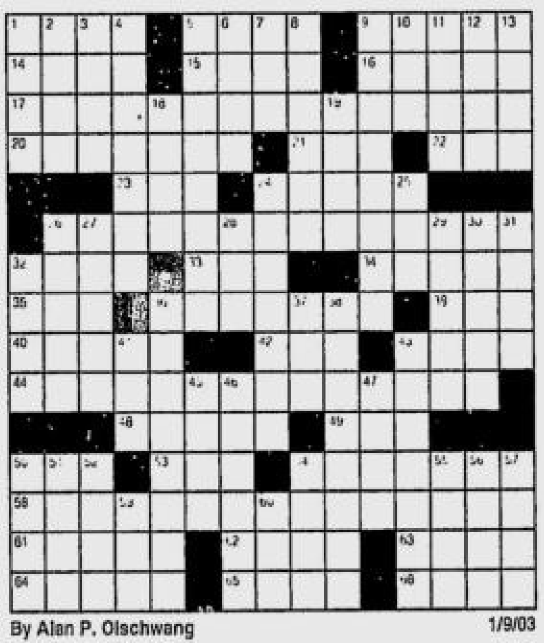
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Keep your thoughts to yourself and remain a mystery to those around you. The less you let everyone know about you, the more likely you are to succeed. You will start to get the respect you're looking for.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): You will be lucky today. Money that you don't have to work for will become available. Look into personal improvements that will make you feel and look the part of someone who is successful.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): You will have a great persona today. Your charm will attract someone very special. Think twice before you let others know too much about your personal life.

Birthday Baby: You will be forceful, dynamic and not likely to take no for an answer. You will always want to be in control and therefore will find yourself in leadership positions.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Alan P. Olschwang
Huntington Beach, CA

1/9/03

ACROSS
1 Cicatrix
5 Cartoonist Al
9 Egyptian patriarchs
14 Mine find
15 Italian wine region
16 Nullify
17 Start of Alliston Herald quote
20 Kneecap
21 Tibetan gazelle
22 Caustic stuff
23 Diamond stat
24 Old as new again
26 Part 2 of quote
32 Unsolicited ms. enclosure
33 Sitter's creation
34 Custom
35 Air purifier letters?
36 One of the Five Nations
39 Seine sight
40 Home of the Heat
42 Brit. med. syst.
43 "__ Here to Eternity"
44 Part 3 of quote
48 Jabbed
49 Shoshone
50 Had a little lamb
53 Moon car, briefly
54 Mom and dad
58 End of quote
61 Juliet's lover
62 Five after four
63 Singer Fitzgerald
64 German industrial city
65 Droops
66 Ooze

DOWN
1 Smack
2 Unconscious state
3 Mine entrance
4 Put away for a rainy day
5 Site of Mary Queen of Scots imprisonment
6 Katmandu's place
7 Quart fractions
8 Swiss child psychologist Jean
9 Eleventh sign
10 Purchase
11 Wail
12 Pale
13 Wing-tip or oxford
18 North Sea feeder
19 Early invader of Rome
24 Matured
25 Switch positions
26 Rabbit fur
27 Hayes or Stern
28 Unnaturally pale
29 Brush buildup
30 Ice palace?
31 Appear
32 18-wheeler
36 One buck
37 Greek X
38 Pacifies
41 Swab
43 Swindles
45 Just got by
46 Poet Felicia Dorothea
47 Italian bell town
50 Lot measure
51 City north of Santa Fe
52 Shade providers
54 Sharp spasm
55 Cairo's river
56 Story
57 Easy task
59 Peggy or Pinky
60 Hamm of soccer

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

O	M	A	S	A		N	E	G	R	I		K	A	Y
R	E	L	E	T		I	D	L	E	R		W	O	E
K	W	A	R	T	E	H	N	O	T	E		A	R	M
			G	U	E	V	A	R	A		A	N	T	E
E	L	K	E		Y	A	S	I	R		S	T	A	N
J	E	W	I	S	O	N		A	D	I	E	U		
E	M	I		C	R	A	T			S	A	M	B	A
C	M	L		H	E	S	E	A	I	S		L	E	N
T	A	T	R	A			A	B	I	E		E	L	I
		I	A	M	B	S		S	P	I	R	A	L	S
O	M	N	I		R	I	V	E	T		E	P	E	E
S	I	G	N		O	M	I	N	O	U	S			
A	L	B		K	W	I	E	T	P	L	E	A	S	E
G	E	E		I	N	A	W	E		N	E	R	T	S
E	R	E		T	E	N	S	E		A	D	A	P	T

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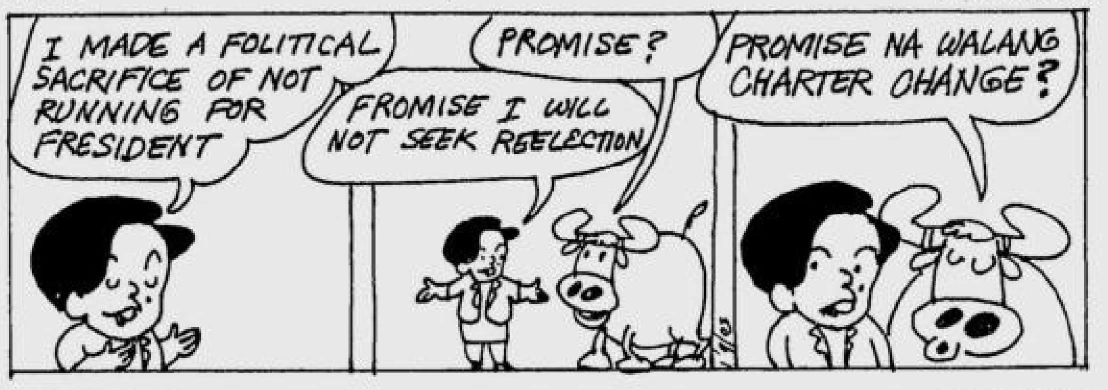
1/8/03

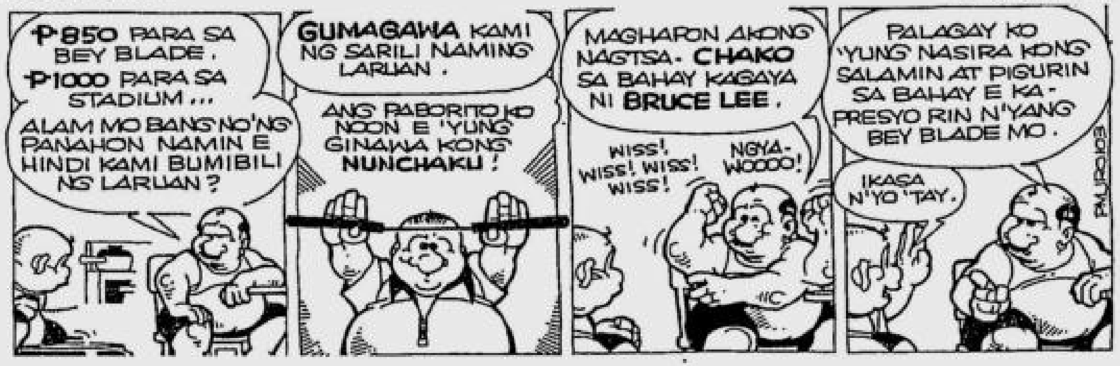
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


I MADE A FOLITICAL SACRIFICE OF NOT RUNNING FOR FRESIDENT
FROMISE I WILL NOT SEEK REELECTION
PROMISE?
PROMISE NA WALANG CHARTER CHANGE?

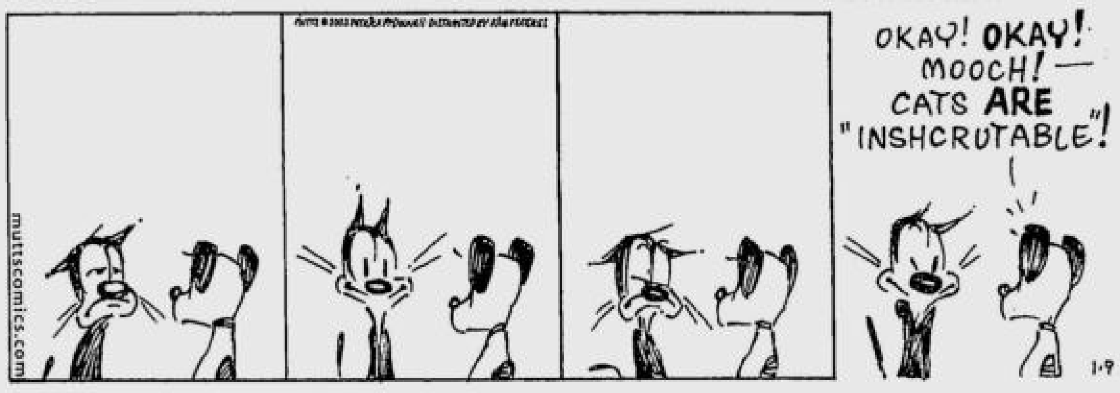
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


₱850 PARA SA BEY BLADE. ₱1000 PARA SA STADIUM... ALAM MO BANG NO'NG PANAHON NAMIN E HINDI KAMI BUMIBILI NG LARUAN?
GUMAGAWA KAMI NG SARILI NAMING LARUAN.
ANG PABORITO KO NOON E 'YUNG GINAWA KONG NUNCHAKU!
MAGHARON AKONG NAGTSA-CHAKO SA BAHAY KAGAYA NI BRUCE LEE.
WISS! WISS! WISS! WISS!
NGYA-WOOOO!
PALAGAY KO 'YUNG NASIRA KONG SALAMIN AT PIGURIN SA BAHAY E KA-PRESYO RIN N'YANG BEY BLADE MO.
IKASA N'YO 'TAY.

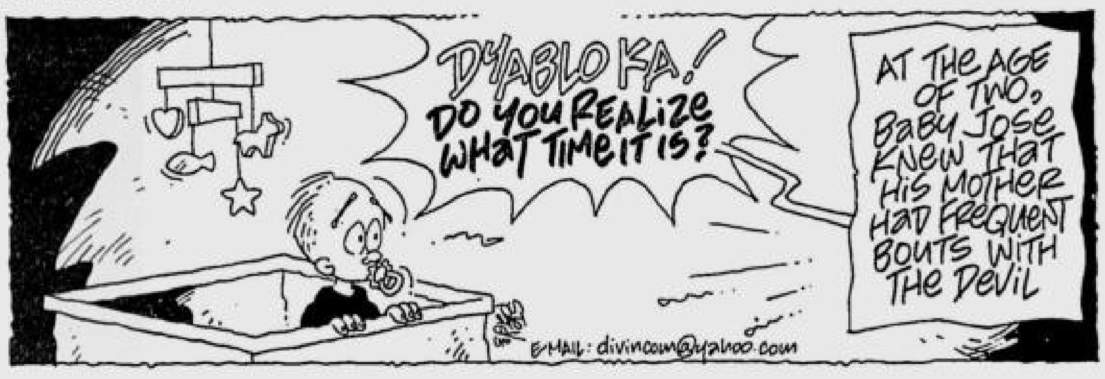
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


OKAY! OKAY! MOOCH! — CATS ARE "INSHCRUTABLE"!
muttscomics.com
1-9

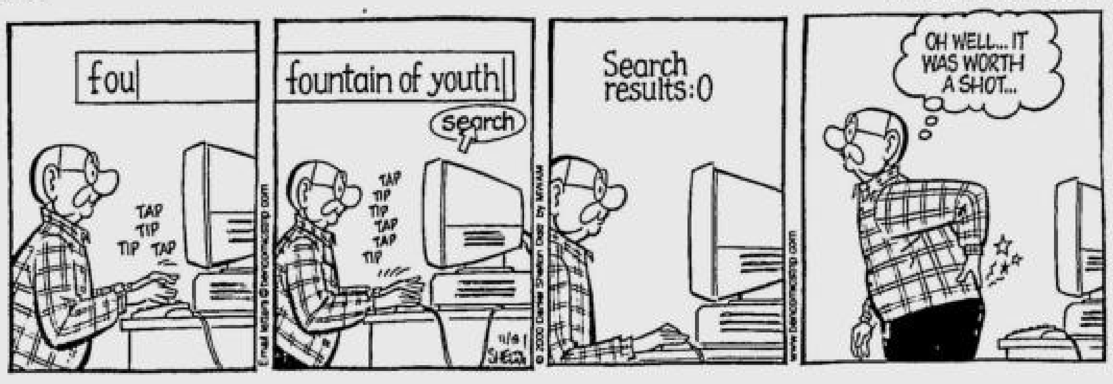
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


D'YABLO KA! DO YOU REALIZE WHAT TIME IT IS?
AT THE AGE OF TWO, BABY JOSE KNEW THAT HIS MOTHER HAD FREQUENT BOUTS WITH THE DEVIL
E-MAIL: divincom@yahoo.com

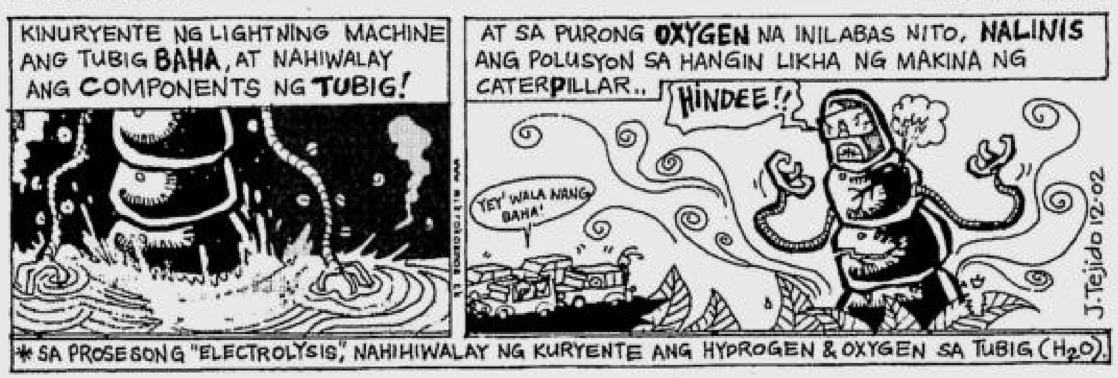
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


fou
TAP TIP TIP TAP
fountain of youth
search
TAP TIP TIP TAP TAP TIP
Search results: 0
OH WELL... IT WAS WORTH A SHOT...

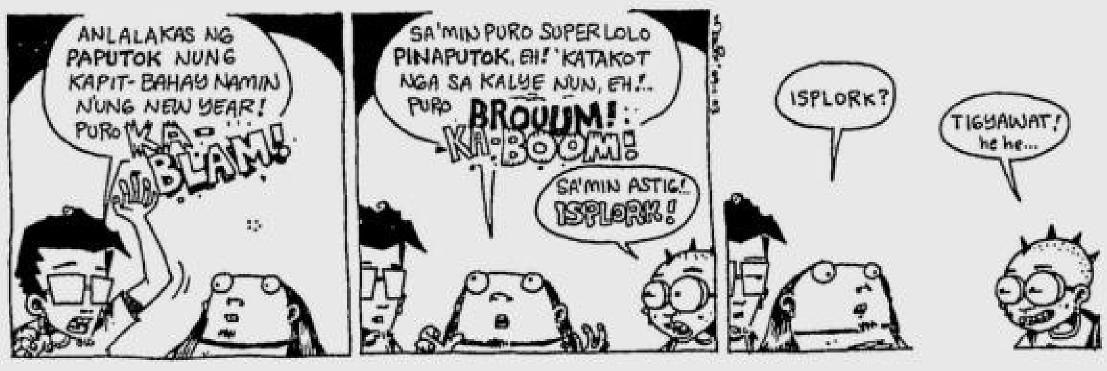
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


KINURYENTE NG LIGHTNING MACHINE ANG TUBIG BAHA, AT NAHIWALAY ANG COMPONENTS NG TUBIG!
AT SA PURONG OXYGEN NA INILABAS NITO, NALINIS ANG POLUSYON SA HANGIN LIKHA NG MAKINA NG CATERPILLAR..
HINDEE!!
YEY! WALA NANG BAHA!
J. Tejido 12-02
* SA PROSESONG "ELECTROLYSIS," NAHIHIWALAY NG KURYENTE ANG HYDROGEN & OXYGEN SA TUBIG (H2O).

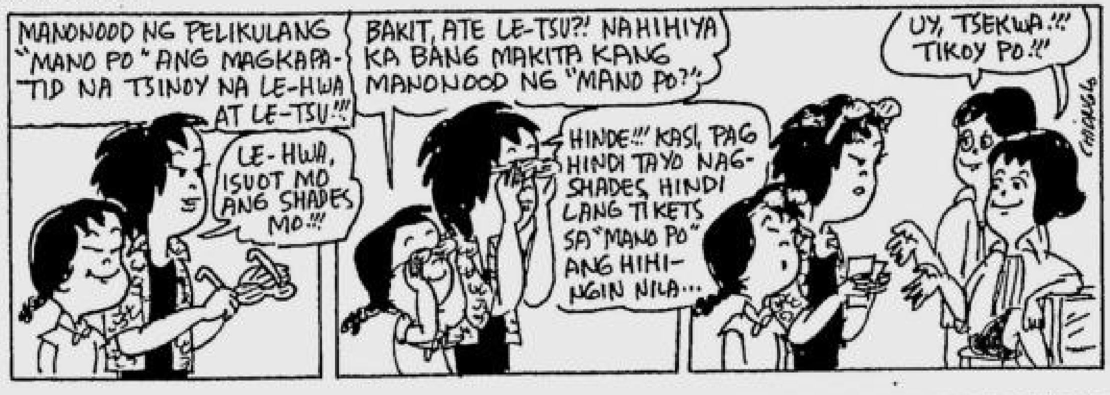
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


ANLALAKAS NG PAPUTOK NUNG KAPIT-BAHAY NAMIN NUNG NEW YEAR! PURO KA-BLAM!
SA'MIN PURO SUPER LOLO PINAPUTOK, EH! 'KATAKOT NGA SA KALYE NUN, EH!.. PURO BROUUM! KA-BOOM!
SA'MIN ASTIG!.. ISPLORK!
ISPLORK?
TIGYAWAT! he he...

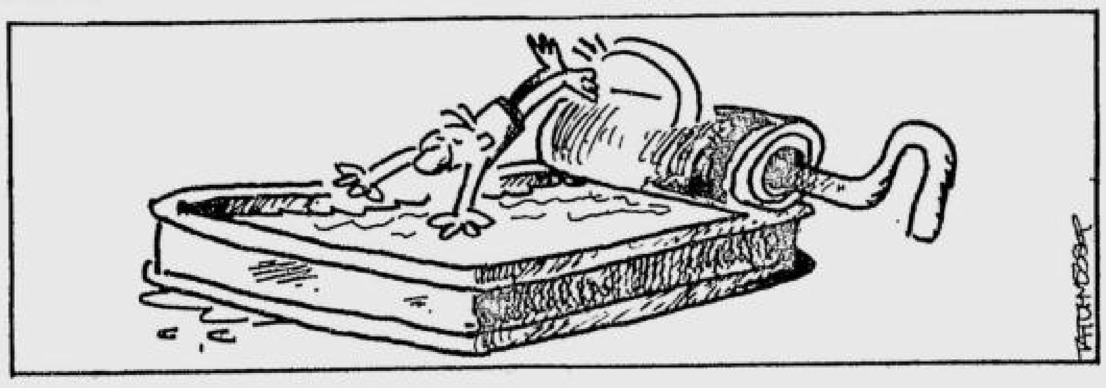
LOVEKNOTS

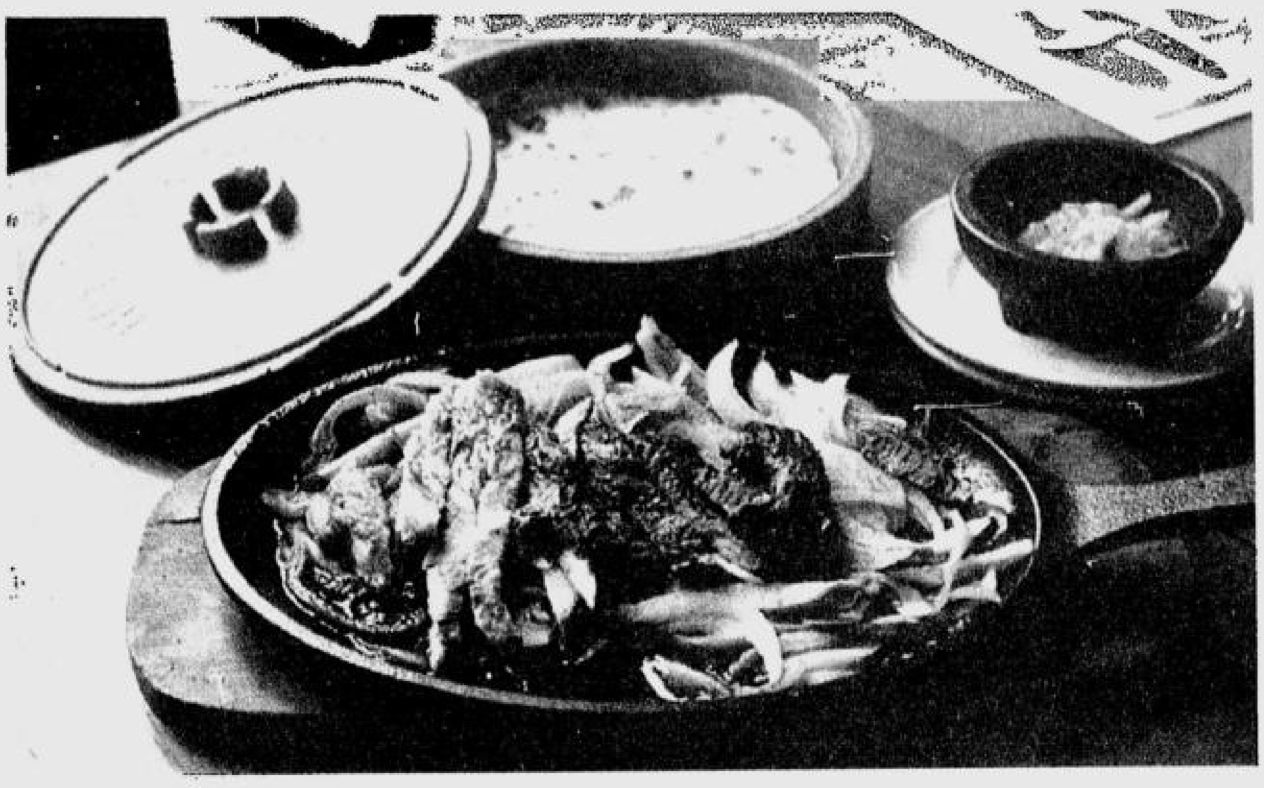
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


MANONOOD NG PELIKULANG "MANO PO" ANG MAGKAPATID NA TSINOY NA LE-HWA AT LE-TSU!!!
LE-HWA, ISUOT MO ANG SHADES MO!!!
BAKIT, ATE LE-TSU?! NAHIHIYA KA BANG MAKITA KANG MANONOOD NG "MANO PO?"
HINDE!!! KASI, PAG HINDI TAYO NAG-SHADES HINDI LANG TIKETS SA "MANO PO" ANG HIHINGIN NILA...
UY, TSEKWA!!! TIKOY PO!!!
CHIONGLO

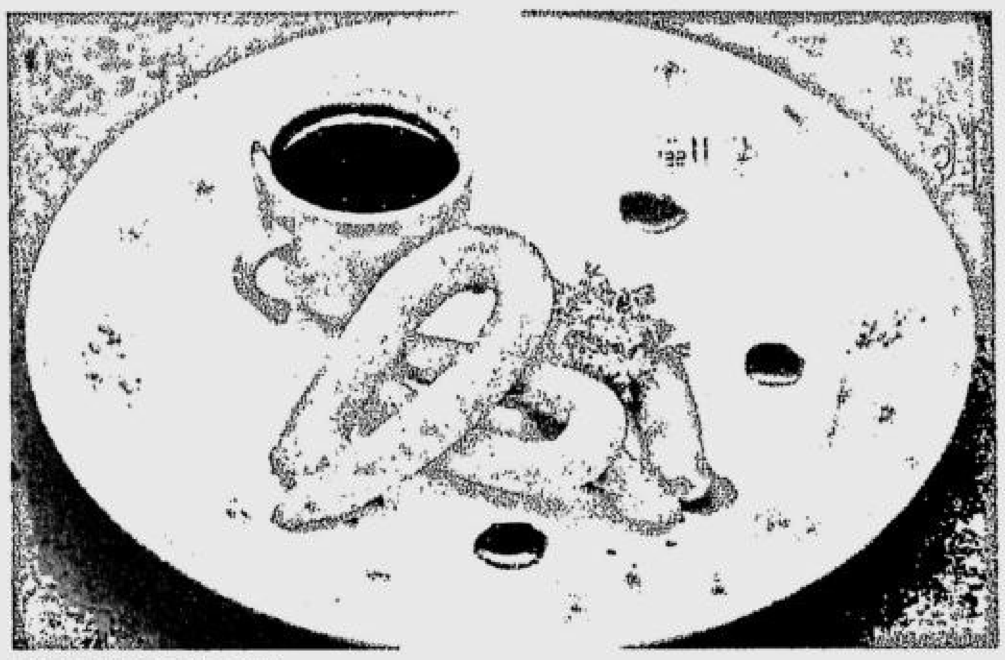
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING





GRANDE Fajita Skillet, chicken and beef on a bed of zucchini, capsicum and onions



CHURROS the Lupe way

Salsa on the side and other hot stuff

THIS ONE IS PINOY: Balut à la Pobre, sautéed in garlic and olive oil

From page C1

breakfast for health sticklers, such as fresh fruit platter and, okay, oatmeal. If Mexican spice is too hot for your taste, there's always Filipino food—Crispy Pata, Kare-kare, Sinigang na Baboy to satiate your cravings even as you stay within your comfort zone.

Flavors of Mexico

"Our menu is really Filipino with Mexican touches," Carranza says. The Pollo Inasal, for instance, under the Ilonggo Favoritos, has salsa for side dish with the option of either rice or tortilla.

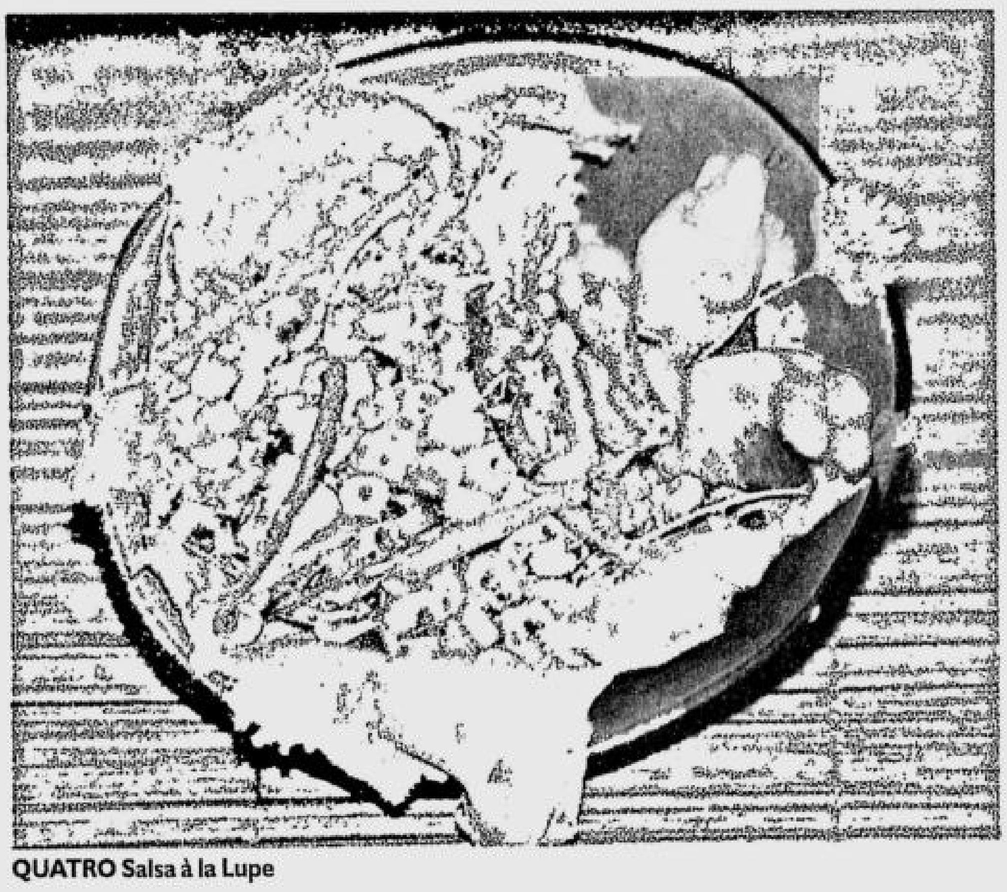
Executive chef Tess Gutierrez and sous chef Tony Castro dish out traditional Mexican fares, such as appetizers Quesadillas, Burritos and Nachos. And what is a Mexican restaurant without tortillas, the flour- or maize-based staple food of generations of Mexicans? Tortillas are what bread is to Europeans; they are so versatile they are eaten as starters, as part of soups, as ingredient of main courses or on their own with meat, cheese or chili sauce—baked, grilled or fried. Coming in different forms such as Tacos, Enchiladas, Tostadas or Quesadillas, Café Lupe has many on its menu.

The Tacos are made of either hard or soft tortilla, filled with lettuce, guacamole, tomatoes, salsa, cheese and sour cream, with your choice of shrimp, grilled *pollo* (chicken) or *arabes* (steak). The best-selling Quesadillas have Chix and Bacon, shrimp, grilled steak and the new Egg and Bacon, served with side salad and tomato salsa. Another bestseller is the Burrito, rolled flour tortilla with refried beans, lettuce and salsa. Get your fix with grilled steak, chicken or grilled vegetables. Of course, there's the Nachos Muchos with everything on it—picadillo, jalapeño, salsa, cheese and sour cream.

Party all you want with what is touted around as Mexico's national drink, the tequila. Café Lupe's bar list for this infamous spirit—extracted from a plant called maguey that grows in the town of Tequila in the province of Jalisco, Mexico—is extensive, creative and can be served in incredibly huge shots. Drink it with a straw and you're in for one heady evening. The list ranges from cocktail drinks and juice-mixed drinks to margaritas, with option to have them mixed with fresh juice, wine coolers, bourbon, cognac, vodka, brandy, among other wondrous things that can turn your world upside down.

E-mail the author at ajambora@inquirer.com.ph

THE INTERIORS complete the Mexican ambience.



QUATRO Salsa à la Lupe

Coffee shop opens new outlet in Alabang

ENJOYING the warm welcome of the Alabang crowd are SBC GM Frederick Siy with Roasters Group VP Paulino Reyes

SEATTLE'S Best Coffee opened its newest branch at Alabang Town Center. The opening was graced by Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr., SBC president Bernadine Siy, SBC COO Frederick Siy, Roasters Inc. marketing director Toti Ferriols and SBC marketing manager Michelle David. Regular patrons like Paco Magsaysay, Raul Zamora, Rep. Mario Almario, Jun Yasay, Mari Ojeda and newscaster Cathy Ong were seen enjoying their favorite SBC drinks.

Also seen were Alabang residents Raffy and Babes Yu, Greg and Tess Yang, Mila Ferrer, Ana Pastrana, Vicky Oppel Revilla, Sally Hofelena, Angie Sison, Susie Sabarre, Yoly Mercado, Joe and Lindy Jalbuena, Ed Yang, Georgian Lane's Dom and Kristine Griffith.

Young beauties Nicole Jacinto, Bianca Fernandez and Nikki Oppen Revilla, were also sighted along with writers Abe Florendo, Donnie Ramirez, Francine Medina and Emmie Velarde.

At 4 p.m., a special Mass was held inside the café followed by a blessing led by Alabang's parish priest Monsignor Chito Bernardo.

A cappella group U-Turn performed selections of pop music.

SEN. Jun Magsaysay, SBC president Bernadine Siy and group marketing director of Roasters Inc, Toti Ferriols

BELLES of the South: (from left) Lily Garrido, Yolly Mercado, Vicky de Guia and Greta Lauron

Step-by-step cookbook launched

AFTER the success of the "Best of Food Magazine" cookbook, now comes another compilation of the recipes found in the magazine's step-by-step section. Food magazine's "Step-by-Step Cookbook" comes with illustrated procedures that makes recipes so easy to follow.

Aside from the recipes from the magazine's step-by-step section, the cookbook also added several items from different sections as well as new dishes readers will surely love.

With vivid photographs that illustrate the important details of each recipe, Food magazine's "Step-by-Step Cookbook" will surely entice readers to get going in the kitchen. Even those who have never cooked before can achieve marvelous results by following the procedures pictured on the pages of the "Step-by-Step Cookbook."

Available in leading magazine stands and bookstores.

Goodbye fruitcake, hello 'tuyo atbp.'

By Mariel N. Francisco
Contributor

LAST Christmas, my pantry brimmed over with *tuyo* and *bagoong*, and I was ecstatic. No (or very few) fruitcakes! I believe it's another proof that adversity makes us dig deeper into our inner resources and brings out the best in us.

I'm speaking of gourmet *tuyo* fillet (dried herring, if you please!), soaked in olive oil, spiced with garlic or capers, and ready-to-serve with hot *sinangag*, scrambled eggs and tomatoes. Heavenly! Or flaked over al dente pasta, if that's what tickles your palate.

I speak, too, of the equally humble *dulong*, our very own anchovies, marinated in olive oil, palm vinegar and *siling* Tagalog, reinvented as a lip-smacking spread on crisp bagel chips. A worthier companion to the best Chardonnay or *lambanog* would be hard to find.

Fruitcake blues

Two Christmases ago, I groaned at the amount of fruitcake that was getting stuck in my fridge. Filipinos in general don't even like fruitcake, especially not the ersatz ones that were making the rounds those days. We had started with the genuine thing, our culinary geniuses even besting the best of imported ones. But as the dollar went up and walnuts, glazed fruits and brandy became too costly, fruitcakes got cakier and more innocuous.

Sure, we're good at copying and improvising, but certain things just don't take to indigenizing. Fruitcake must be made with the right ingredients in the right proportions, or it just ain't fruitcake. And fake fruitcake, pretty with nuts and cherries on top but all floury goo inside, is the worst thing you can pass around at Christmastime. (Now chocolate chip cookies are in danger of going this way, too: home bakers, be mindful!)

World-class treasures

Now, hallelujah! Hard times are drawing forth our ever-amazing creativity and making us claim our very own. We are learning to appreciate the treasures of our native kitchen and turning them into world-class products. For so long, Pinoy was *baduy* and imported was status-giving. Now, we can dare hope we are at last being liberated from our paralyzing colonial mentality.

When I noticed that the Department of Tourism was touting a *kesong puti* festival in Laguna, a *barako* coffee festival in Batangas, and a *puto* festival in Pangasinan, I knew we were on to something exciting.

As for *tuyo* in olive oil, I have been an addict since I got my first jar from Tina Garcia 10 years ago, and have been sending them to friends and relatives abroad (later supplied by Carmel Dael, who also makes delicious *bangus* sardines). I am elated that gourmet *tuyo* is now deemed worthy to be "dressed in holiday style."

Our best can be up there with the rest of the world's best

GOURMET Tuyo and Spanish Sardines

Besides *tuyo* and *dulong*, last Christmas, I received *acharang pako*, *kangkong* and *dampalit*; *barako* coffee; chocolate *tablea*; *tinapa* from Bataan and Cavite; *tamales* from Pampanga; and rare mountain rice from Chris and Winnie Monsod, and Mol and Lilli Ann Fernando.

My Ilongga friend Ging Naguiat, a serious health buff, proudly sent me organic Spring Tea, a refreshing bouquet of oregano, marjoram, tarragon, spearmint and peppermint grown in the Buro-buro Spring Herbs Farm in Talisay City.

It is my greatest pleasure to patronize local entrepreneurs and marvel at their boundless talents for coming up with new products that speak of who we are. Aside from excellent product development, we now have creative packaging using native materials with sophistication, such as *banig* boxes, *sinamay* wraps and ribbons, papier mâché trays, handmade paper and jute bags, all recyclable and biodegradable.

For years, we have given to friends at Christmas, preserves of coconut *tubo* and *calamansi* stuffed with *nata de piña*, or yummy salted duck eggs, exquisitely prepared by my husband's aunt in Pagsanjan, Laguna. This year, an enterprising young woman in my neighborhood helped me dress them up with fabric trims and matching tags for a smart "Philippine country" look. The "can-do" resourcefulness among our young people today, coupled with their creative business sense, is one of the bright spots lighting our country's future.

Gifts tell stories

Gifts, which are a part of us, keep us connected to our roots and make us tell stories that give life to our spirit. As I thanked Jake Almeda Lopez for the delicate *apas* he sends us every Christmas, he waxed nostalgic about the old lady from Lucban who labors over them following an heirloom recipe.

The peerless *puto seco* and *mamon tostado* we received from Gicer and Tita Sicat came with a card about the octogenarian in Cabalantian, Bacolor, Pampanga, who makes them from a 200-year-old recipe handed down through generations. My neighbor, Chita Monroy Oreta, did not stop at "You're welcome!" when I thanked her for the fragrant jar of *bagoong* she had sent me. "It's made from scratch with the freshest *alamang* by a relative in Navotas," she boasted.

Our best can be up there with the rest of the world's best. Only by being the best of who we are will we find our niche in this era of globalization.

Tuyo without the spines and smell? Why not? Iran has its caviar, France its paté, Spain its sardines, and so on. The Pinoy, too, can win the world with his very own!

CENTER FOR ASIAN CULINARY STUDIES
CAFÉ YSABEL RESTAURANT
455 P. Guevarra Street, San Juan, Metro Manila
Tel. Nos. 725-5089 / 726-9326
www.cafeysabel.com
Email: cafeysabel@mydestiny.net

JANUARY SCHEDULE
RECREATIONAL AND ONE-DAY BUSINESS CLASS

Jan. 12, Sun. – GENE'S FAVORITE PASTA SAUCES 1. Seafood in Saffron Crème & Proscuitto, Squid Ink, Vegetarian White Cheese and Herbs, Sicilian Tuna Roe and many more are the recipes that Chef Gene will teach us. P880.00 including ingredients from 9:00 – 12:00 noon

Jan. 13, Mon. – SPECIAL EVERYDAY MEALS 1. This meal that Chef Gino teaches is meant to put a smile on every person seated on the table. Recipes include Fried Mozzarella with Marinara Sauce, Gambas, Chicken Parmiggiano, Grape Salad, Fillet of Steak with 3 Mushroom Gravy and Butterscotch Cream Pie. For P1,200.00 including ingredients from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Jan. 14, Tues. – EVERYBODY LOVES CHICKEN 1. Chicken dishes from Chef Junjun for the whole family to enjoy. Chicken Perrins, Dutch Oven Roast Chicken, Spanish Chicken Stew, Chicken Teriyaki, Oven BBQ Chicken and Pollo Parmigiana for P1,500.00 including all ingredients from 10:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Jan. 15, Tues. – SPECIAL EVERYDAY MEALS 2. Chef Gino will teach us another set of easy to do meals like Stuffed Mushrooms, Salpicado, Chicken ala King in Phyllo Cups, Penne with Four Cheese Sauce, Salmon Meuniere with Lemon Dill Veloute, Bananas with Rhum and Raisins. Recipes include all ingredients from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. for P1,200.00.

Jan. 16, Thurs. – THE SAUSAGE WORKSHOP 1 Recipes from Chef Gene for you to learn and can be use in business. The recipes are Italian Sausage, Morcillas or Blood Sausage, Longganisang Calumpit, Breakfast Pork Sausage, Seafood Sausage, Sulipan Sausage and Chorizo de Jabali. Recipes include all ingredients for P1.300.00 from 10:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Jan. 17, Fri. – PORK DISHES 1. Chef Junjun cooks an array of delectable Pork recipes for everyone's enjoyment. Recipes include Stuffed Pork Roast, Italian Style; Pork Hwang; Sate Spareribs; Toyobaboy; Ham Macaroni Special and Pork Shish Kebab. Including all ingredients for P1,500.00 from 10:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Jan. 18, Sat. – FRIENDLY AND FUN-FILLED FONDUE. Learn these fun-filled dishes of Swiss Cheese Fondue, Italian Bagna Cauda, Beef Fondue Bourgogne and Chocolate Fondue from Chef Gene Gonzalez including all ingredients from 9:00 – 12:00 noon for P980.00.

Jan. 19, Sun. – SOUTHEAST ASIAN MEAL 1. Chef Gene presents to you a complete and easy to prepare meal from Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore such as Bah Kuh Teh (Tonic Pork Rib Soup), Chili Crabs, Moo Pat Ped Fakyaw (Spiced Ground Pork with Winged Bean), Ayam Panggang (Spiced Fried Chicken), Nasi Lemak (Coconut Rice), Kari Ikan Kepala (Traditional Fish Head Curry) and Soong Sah Hot Lou (Gelatin and Coco Cream). Recipes include all ingredients for P880.00 from 9:00 – 12:00 noon.

Jan. 21, Tues. – DAVE'S PASTA SPECIALS. Chef David Fajardo presents his Sicilian style recipes from The Villa Italia Restaurant in Houston. Recipes include Seafood Pesto, Homemade Salsa Pomodoro, Roasted Vegetable Pasta, Bistecca ala Villa Italia with Primavera Pasta and many more. For P1,200.00 from 10:00 – 3:00 p.m. including all ingredients. NEW CLASS.

Jan. 22, Wed. – A JAPANESE MEAL 1 Recipes include Sukiyaki, Shabu-shabu, Miso Soup, Nimono and Gindara Teriyaki from Chef Aoki including all ingredients from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. for P1,200.00.

Jan. 23, Thurs. –SPANISH MEAL 1. Recipes from Ms. Betina Legarda's file of Spanish meals which includes Alcachofas con Chorizo, Ensalada de Naranjas, Sopa de Ajo y Bariaciones, Almejas y Pescado con Salsa Verde(I), Pollo con Aceitunas and Flan Especial for P1,500.00 including all ingredients from 10:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Jan. 24, Fri. – SUSHI AND SASHIMI WORKSHOP 1. Chef Rikichi Aoki from Osaka, Japan will teach us simple and basic recipes in doing Sushi and Sashimi. Recipes include California Roll, Tekka Roll, Tekka Maki, Tuna, Shrimp, Ika (Squid), Salmon, Usuzukuri, How to make Sushi rice and also Sauces to accompany our sushi and sashimi. Including all ingredients for P1,500.00 from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Jan. 25, Sat. – THAI FAVORITES 1. Bangkok Chef Chariya Thaikupt will teach her favorite Thai dishes like Tom Yam, Paad Thai, Chicken Pandan, Pork Satay with Peanut Sauce and Cucumber Salad, Chicken Green Curry and Tako in Pandan leaves. P1,200.00 including all ingredients from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Jan. 26, Sun. – BASIC FILIPINO COOKERY Chef Gene will teach us simple recipes that include Apalit Kare-kare Special with Bagoong Guisado, Samal Rice, Guinataang Hipon sa Dilaw, Davao Bulalo, Kapampangan Adobo and Manga at Bilo-bilo for P880.00 from 9:00 – 12:00 noon.

Jan. 27, Mon. – THAI FAVORITES 2. The recipes from Thai Chef Chariya Thaikupt, Tom Kha Talay, Bagoong Rice, Roasted Duck Curry, Crispy Catfish with Green Mango Salad, Thai Halo-halo at P1,200.00 from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. Recipes include all ingredients.

Jan. 28, Tues. – EVERYBODY LOVES CHICKEN 2. The second time around for Chef Junjun this time sharing his old homestyle chicken dishes. Chicken Adobo with Kamatis, Spanish Chicken Rice, Chicken in Seven-up, Salpicon, Italian Chicken Stew and Chicken Liver Pate for P1,500.00 including all ingredients from 10:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Jan. 29, Wed. – FAVORITE COOKIES AND BARS 1. Chef Junjun who grew up with Nutty Butterscotch Bars, Oatmeal Mango Cookies; Honey Orange Bars, Rocky Road Bar, Amaretti Cookies and Neiman's Mistake for P1,500.00 including all ingredients from 10:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Jan. 30, Thurs. – SPANISH MEAL 2. For the part 2 of our Spanish meal: Betina Legarda will teach recipes such as Gambas Ajillo, Pan con Tomate, Fabada Asturiana con Salsa Aleoli Rapido, Paella Marinera, Pollo con Chorizo and Crema Catalana. For P1,500.00 including all ingredients from 10:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Jan. 31, Fri. – THE SPOON DESSERTS. Chef Junjun will make his popular easy to do desserts served and eaten with a spoon. Great for instant parties and big catering jobs. His line-up are the following: Strawberry Cream Magic, Raspberry and Mandarin Gelatine, Tiramisu Now, Apple Bake with Cinnamon Sauce, Cappuccino Pannacotta, Bread and Butter Pudding and Chocolate Budini P1,200.00 from 10:00 – 3:00 p.m. including all ingredients.

THE PROFESSIONAL CULINARY ARTS PROGRAM

The Professional Culinary Arts Program prepares students for professional entry into the food service industry. This intensive program integrates classical and modern culinary techniques with kitchen management skills. Students learn how to prepare soups, sauces, vegetables, entrees, breads, pastries and desserts. They will learn how to identify, fabricate and portion meat, poultry, fish and shellfish. The course will also provide the introductory skills on Asian cooking, wine appreciation and table service.

The program is a hands-on training series for students to gain proficiency in various skills needed to perform at professional standards in a commercial kitchen. The students will also prepare a Legacy buffet. The program has Internship or In-house Practicum for 200 hours and Externship or Outside Practicum for 200 hours. Enrollment includes 2 sets of uniforms, chef's kit, manual and all the ingredients to be used.

Classes will start on February. Enrollment is ongoing. For inquiries and reservations, call 726-9326 or 725-5089 and look for Marilyn or Glady.

Make dining doubly fun and rewarding

DINING OUT

T.G.I.Friday's Glorietta and Alabang Town Center are offering freebies. All you need to do is dine at any of these two outlets using your Ayala Discount Plus Card. Aside from the points you'll earn from your discount card, you'll also get one point in your Friday's Xtra Rewards card for every P100 food purchase. T.G.I.Friday's also has branches at Robinsons Place Manila, Hotel Rembrandt in Quezon City and The Brickroad of Sta. Lucia East.

ITALIANNI'S Restaurant offers three desserts in single serving. Sticky Chocolate Pudding is a rich chocolate cake with dates and toasted pecan nuts served on a bed of caramel sauce. Pane Budino has tuscan bread slices soaked in milk eggwash with raisins, served on Anglaise sauce and topped with creamy vanilla ice cream. Cannoli has thin rolls of cookie sheets stuffed with ricotta cheese on a bed of rich chocolate sauce. Italianni's Restaurant's branches are located at Greenbelt 2; 2/L Glorietta 4; and the Corte Delas Palmas in Alabang Town Center.

SHIRAZ on Perea Street in Legaspi Village offers an all-new lunch and dinner menu. Available are Paella Valencia, Spanish Rice with Beef Tenderloin, Chicken, Chorizo and Pork, Adobo Flakes, Beef Stew with Chicken, Spanish Blood Sausage and Chorizo de Bilbao, and Callos. The new menu also includes *tapas* and pasta dishes. For dessert, try White Toblerone Cheesecake and Mango Pavlova.

MAX'S Restaurant offers Fried Chicken Sandwich. It has the crispiest lettuce and freshest tomatoes, smothered with the right amount of mayo. It has the same crispy and tasty fried chicken that everybody loves, but this time without the bone, in between two slices of soft baked torpedo bread.

DISH FOR ALL SEASONS
San Mig at El Pueblo in Ortigas Center serves three special versions of the Paella—Paella Classica (above), with chicken, pork, seafood, *chorizo* and vegetables; Paella Marinara, assorted seafood with *chorizo*, mushroom and green olives; and Paella Negra, black paella with a mix of seafood, meat and vegetables cooked in squid sauce. Call 632-7144 or 637-5499.

SAUSAGE HEAVEN
Enter sausage heaven at Santis Delicatessen with its mile-long assortment of sausages and great European cold cuts, such as Lyoner sausages, with various choices—mushroom, pepperoni, olive, multigrain and carrot. For Polish sausage, choices are fibrella, mortadella, gottinger, florentiner, bierwurst, beef salami, meatloaf, jellied pork to a wide selection of ham.Call 816-3307.

MoonDish
CAMANSI
Traditional
MoonDish
CAMANSI
Vegetarian

READY-TO-SERVE 'GINATAANG CAMANSI'
Looking for a veggie dish to balance your meaty lunch or supper? Then, pair your meat with *ginataang camansi*! Moonbake Inc. is bringing you this veggie dish in its newest product offering—Moondish Camansi. Available in traditional and vegetarian variants, Moondish Camansi is now available in leading supermarkets and groceries in Metro Manila. Call 801-8320 or 802-8301.

Delightful chicken and shrimp meal

WELCOME 2003 with a bang by savoring this delightful light chicken and shrimp meal. The recipe was created by chef Ponz Cordero exclusively for Lea & Perrins Worcestershire Sauce.

Chicken and Shrimp Dumplings Fondue

200 g boneless chicken leg, finely ground
100 g shrimp, medium size, cleaned and roughly chopped
15 g carrots finely diced
15 g onions, finely diced
10 g Chinese mushroom, finely diced
10 g ginger, finely minced
10 g spring onions
30 g green peas
3 tbsp heavy cream
1 tbsp Lea & Perrins Worcestershire Sauce
1 tbsp soy sauce
salt and pepper
20 pcs wonton wrapper
50 g flour (diluted with water)

Tomato Cream Fondue:
2 tbsp canola oil
15 g garlic
15 g shallots
1 c white cooking wine
2 c heavy cream
½ c tomato sauce
1 tbsp Lea & Perrins Worcestershire Sauce
75 g sundried tomatoes, thinly sliced
10 g basil, thinly sliced
30 g parmesan cheese, grated
Salt, pepper, lemon juice to taste

For the dumpling: In a large bowl, combine all ingredients together, except flour. Cook a small amount for flavor. Place a tablespoon on a wrapper. Brush on the edges of the wrapper with the flour. Fold together. Press and crimp edges to seal filling inside wrapper. Cook the wonton dumplings on a large pot of lightly salted boiling water. Set aside and keep warm (should be cooked when dumpling floats on top of water).

For the sauce: Sauté garlic and shallots in canola oil until brown. Deglaze with white wine and reduce to ¼. Add cream and reduce by 1/3 or until slightly thickened. Add tomato sauce, sun-dried tomato, Lea & Perrins Worcestershire Sauce and Parmesan cheese. Continue to reduce to desired consistency (if too thick, add stock to thin out). Season to taste with salt and pepper and lemon juice. Finish with sliced basil and Parmesan for added flavor. Serves 4.